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CORRECTION

In his review of *The People and the Press* (Poll Review, POQ, Fall 1987), Seymour Sudman criticizes the Gallup Organization for using 1970 Census data as a sampling frame for the various samples drawn as part of the project. Gallup was negligent, but the error was not one of methodological neglect. Had the technical appendix of the final report been proofread more carefully, "1970" would have been corrected to "1980."

TRENDS IN POLITICAL TOLERANCE

JOHN MUELLER

Abstract Some researchers find a substantial increase in political tolerance since the 1950s, while others find the increase to be "illusory"—the public is more tolerant now of leftists, but has simply found other targets on which to vent its intolerance. Reanalysis and the addition of more extensive trend data from 1940 to 1985 suggest that the shift *does* seem primarily to reflect increased tolerance of leftists, but that the public has *not* found other groups to be intolerant of. Measured tolerance has fluctuated greatly over the period, reflecting mainly changes in perceptions of threat from putatively subversive groups, especially domestic Communists. Also, the public's grasp of, and self-interested concern about, civil liberties seems so minimal that one might argue not that the public is substantially tolerant or intolerant, but that it has no really tangibly measurable "attitude" on the subject one way or the other.

Several recent studies have dealt with the American public's tolerance for dissent and nonconformity. Part of the discussion has revolved around the issue of changes in the level of tolerance—specifically, whether there has been an increase in this quality since the 1950s.

The benchmark for these studies has been Samuel A. Stouffer's classic study of civil liberties, published in 1955. Stouffer's survey posed an array of questions about Communists, Socialists, and atheists and sought to assess the public's willingness to allow such people to speak and to hold various kinds of jobs. Twenty years later, comparative data became available. In 1973, Stouffer's 1954 survey was substantially replicated, and, beginning in 1972, several of his central questions have been included on the General Social Survey of the National Opin-

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ion Research Center. Analyses of these data have generally concluded that there has been a very substantial, broadly based increase in tolerance since 1954 in the American public (Cutler and Kaufman, 1975; Davis, 1975; Erskine and Siegel, 1975; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; McClosky and Brill, 1983:434–438).

Challenging this central finding have been John Sullivan, James Piereson, and George Marcus. First in an essay in a popular magazine, then in an article in a scholarly journal, then in a book, they argue that these supposed increases in political tolerance were "illusory" (1979a, 1979b, 1982). Instead, they assert, "claims that the public is now more tolerant than in the 1950s are either untrue or greatly exaggerated" (1982:250; see also pp. 67n, 70, 77, 82). They concede that "attitudes toward Communists, socialists, and atheists are now more favorable," but suggest that "citizens are now able to point to other political groups toward which they feel more hostility" (1982:77, 69).

To test this notion, they devised a "content-controlled" measure of tolerance and applied it on a national survey in 1978. Respondents were handed a card listing ten groups, including not only those Stouffer asked about, like Communists and atheists, but also an anarchic terrorist group (the Symbionese Liberation Army), an extreme black nationalist group (the Black Panthers), and three right wing groups: the Ku Klux Klan, the John Birch Society, and "fascists."[1] After the respondents had selected their "least-liked group" from this array, they were asked several questions about tolerating that group, and it was found that tolerance so measured was lower than that obtained by the direct Stouffer questions.

This paper seeks to reassess this debate over trends in tolerance. It recalculates the 1954 Stouffer measures to partially simulate the Sullivan least-liked group question, reevaluates the full response cadences obtained by the least-liked group question, compares the two, and concludes that, when so measured, increases in tolerance from the 1950s are still remarkably significant even when the Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus assertions are taken into account.

Then, however, an effort is made to get a richer perspective on trends in political tolerance by bringing in additional poll data covering the period from the early 1940s to the mid-1980s. It is concluded, in agreement with Sullivan and his colleagues, that measured shifts reflect declines in specific intolerance toward Communists. However, in disagreement with them, it is argued that the public has *not* redirected its intolerance to other groups, since none poses the threat Communists were perceived to pose in the 1950s. Should such a group arise, it is to be expected that high levels of intolerance would once again be found.

---

[1] This list changes the rules of the game somewhat. Although the Communist party is often accused of being violence-prone and terroristic at base, it adopts much of the usual trappings of a legitimate political party and is accepted by many as such. The Symbionese Liberation Army (the least-liked group for 8% of the respondents) never had any such pretensions—violence and terror were its regular course of business—and by almost any democratic theory it is criminal and outside the bounds of legitimate political discourse. To a considerable degree, the same can be said for the Ku Klux Klan (24%) and for the Black Panthers (6%) in some of their incarnations. (For related criticisms, see McClosky and Brill, 1983:435–436n; and Caspi and Seligson, 1983:396–397.)

The paper discusses the considerable fluctuations in measured tolerance that have occurred over the last half century, and it concludes with some comments about the degree to which the public can be said to be whimsical in its approach to the issue of civil liberties. Although the public seems able to react to news events in a predictable manner, it may be most useful to conclude that no meaningfully measurable attitude on tolerance exists.

The Stouffer Shift

Although the Sullivan survey sought, in part, to be comparable to the Stouffer survey, only two of the Sullivan questions about the respondents' least-liked group actually are meaningfully comparable to the Stouffer items. One of these, a question asking whether members of the least-liked group "should be allowed to make a speech in this city," is quite directly comparable. The other asks whether members of the least-liked group "should be allowed to teach in public schools." When asking about Communists, Stouffer asked whether they should be *fired* from teaching in a *college*. The differences are troublesome but, fortunately, various comparisons possible with the Stouffer data suggest they are probably not too significant (see also Abramson, 1983:257n).

The data for Stouffer's questions are given in Table 1. A shift is evident. Between 1954 and 1972 or 1973, there was an increase of between 24 and 33 percentage points in tolerance as measured by these two questions and a decrease of between 23 and 34 percentage points in intolerance. Of interest, and of later relevance, is the fact that while substantial shifts are documented on the questions during the 18 years between 1954 and 1972, there has been no clear further liberalization in the 13 years since then on the speech question. There is a possible 10 percentage point liberalization on the teaching question between 1972 and 1985—but only if one ignores the 1973 and 1974 figures. During the 1972–1985 period NORC also asked about tolerance of atheists, rac-

Table 1. Trends in the Stouffer Questions, 1954–1985

	Communist Should Be Allowed to Speak			Communist Teacher Should Be Fired		
	Yes	No	DK,NA	Yes	No	DK,NA
1954	27%	68	5	89%	6	5
1972	52%	45	4	61%	32	7
1973	60%	38	2	55%	39	6
1973N	53%	42	6	63%	30	7
1974	58%	39	3	52%	42	6
1976	55%	43	2	54%	41	5
1977	55%	42	2	57%	39	4
1978S	60%	36	4			
1980	55%	42	3	53%	41	6
1982	56%	41	3	50%	43	6
1984	59%	38	3	49%	46	5
1985	57%	40	3	51%	44	4

Sources: 1954—Stouffer, 1955. 1973N—Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 1983. 1978S—Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982. All other years—General Social Survey data files, NORC.

Questions: Now I should (would) like to ask you some questions about a man who admits he is a Communist. Suppose this admitted Communist wanted (wants) to make a speech in your community. Should he be allowed to speak, or not? Suppose he is teaching in a college. Should he be fired, or not?

ists, antidemocratic militarists, and homosexuals. For the most part results on these questions also varied little over the period.[2]

The Least-Liked Group Shift

A problem in trying to compare the least-liked group questions asked by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus in 1978 with the 1954 Stouffer ques-

2. NORC asked whether members of each of the five groups should be allowed to speak, to teach college, and to have a book in the public library. For atheists there was no change on the speech and book questions, and a 4 or 5 percentage point liberalization on the teaching question. For people who believe that "blacks are genetically inferior," there was no change on the teaching or book questions, and an *il*liberalization of a few percentage points on the speaking question. For people who advocate eliminating elections and "letting the military run the country," there was no change on the speech and book questions, and a possible 2 or 3 percentage point liberalization on the teaching questions. For homosexuals there was no change on the book question, a 5 percentage point liberalization on the speech question, and a 10 percentage point liberalization on the teaching question. The data for the speech and teaching questions for admitted Communists are given in Table 1; on the book question there was no change.

tions in Table 1 is that the comparison assumes everyone in 1954 would have selected admitted Communists as their least-liked group had they been presented with a list of groups like the one used by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus in 1978. In arguing there has been "little if any" change in tolerance since the 1950s, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus compare the results of their least-liked group question with those obtained by Stouffer when he asked about admitted Communists. But while it may well be the case that Communists were the least-liked group for most people in 1954 (as they were in 1978—see Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982:86), there were doubtless many among the 1954 population who, if given a choice, would have said they liked some other group even less—fascists or the Ku Klux Klan, for example—and some of these would probably have been willing to suppress the speech of those groups even while advocating free speech for Communists. Thus in comparison to the Sullivan approach, the Stouffer measure *overstates* the tolerance levels of 1954.[3]

Unfortunately Stouffer did not ask about tolerating right wing groups, but he did ask about several groups besides admitted Communists: atheists, Socialists, and alleged Communists. A closer approximation to the Sullivan question can therefore be generated by retabulating the Stouffer data to derive the number who would be intolerant of *any* of these four groups. When that is done, the measured tolerance of 1954 shifts downward. While 27% of the 1954 population would allow Communists to speak, only 19% would allow all four groups to speak; and while 68% would cut off the speech of Communists, fully 81% would do so for at least one of the four groups. As for the teaching question, the already low 6% tolerance level declines to 4%, while the portion in favor of firing rises from 89% to 95%. These changes, reported in the first two columns of Table 2, are caused overwhelmingly by people who would tolerate Communists but not atheists.

It should be observed that these figures *still* overestimate the amount of tolerance abroad in the land in 1954. Some of those tolerant of all four groups might be willing to cut off the liberties of the kinds of right wing and terrorist groups asked about in the 1978 Sullivan survey.

Another underappreciated difference between the Stouffer and the Sullivan civil liberties questions concerns the response options. Rather than simply asking the respondents whether they would allow free speech or not, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus gave their respondents a card with five response categories, one which was comparatively encouraging about an "uncertain" option; then they were asked "tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, *are uncertain,* disagree, or strongly

---

[3] Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus evidence an awareness of this problem (1982:32, 39).

Table 2. Willingness to Allow Groups to Speak or Teach, 1954 and 1978

	Stouffer, 1954		Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1978	
	Communists	Communists, Atheists, Alleged Communists, and Socialists	Least-Liked Group (% of All Respondents)	Least-Liked Group (% of Respondents Questioned)
Speak				
Allow	27%	19%	50%	55%
No opinion/uncertain	5	1	7	7
Not allow	68	81	34	37
Teach				
Allow	6%	4%	19%	20%
No opinion/uncertain	5	1	10	11
Not allow	89	95	62	68

disagree" (emphasis added). By contrast, a respondent on Stouffer's survey would have to volunteer a no opinion response. Thus, on the Sullivan formulation, measured uncertainty will be higher and therefore *both* measured tolerance *and* intolerance will be lower.

A third incomparability arises from the fact that fully 10% of the respondents in the Sullivan survey were unable or unwilling to select a least-liked group, and these people were accordingly not asked the tolerance questions. Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus included these people in the base when they calculated their percentages for the tolerance questions with the result that both tolerance and intolerance, as measured, would be further reduced.

As it happens, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus report only the percentage measured tolerant on the two crucial questions from their 1978 survey—a figure which, as indicated, will be twice deflated. When one looks at the entire array of results, as in Table 2, an interesting picture emerges.

On the speech question, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus argue that measured tolerance rose from 27% to 50% (compare columns 1 and 3 in Table 2), an increase smaller than those found on the Stouffer questions—though not, as Abramson (1980) has observed, very much smaller. However, one could, with equal validity, compare the not allow/intolerance figures from those same questions and observe that intolerance declined from 68% to 34%, a drop as large as any found on the Stouffer comparisons. Moreover, a comparison of the four-group combination (which, as noted, *still* overstates the amount of tolerance in the 1954 public) with the Sullivan formulation shows a 31 percentage point rise (from 19% to 50%) in tolerance and a 47 percentage point decrease (from 81% to 34%) in intolerance. A fairer and more straightforward approach would be to eliminate those who were never asked the civil liberties questions in 1978 because they said they had no least-liked group. When this is done (in the last column of Table 2), changes in attitude at least as significant as those found with the straight Stouffer comparisons of Table 1 still prevail. Finally, if one were to reapportion the 17% of the respondents with no opinion or with no least-liked group in some reasonable manner, a substantial shift in tolerance would still be found.

The same sort of analysis is applied to the teaching question in the bottom half of Table 2, and here Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus are on somewhat stronger ground. They report the top figure in the first and third columns, and conclude tolerance has increased only 13 percentage points, from 6% to 19%. However, it would be equally valid to report the results for the other part of the question and conclude intolerance has dropped 27 percentage points—in line with the 32 or 33 percentage point change found with the Stouffer question (1954 vs.

1978 in Table 1). Removing or reapportioning the respondents with no opinion or with no least-liked group would yield a tolerance shift smaller than the one found by the Stouffer measures, but this procedure would still clearly suggest a solid increase in political tolerance since the 1950s.

Trends in Tolerance

Thus there was a marked increase in political tolerance between 1954 and the 1970s even taking the Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus critique into account. To evaluate this shift more fully, it would be useful to place it in broader historical context. Tables 3, 4, and 5 supply some of this context.

Table 3. Trends in Support for Radio Speeches by Communists

A. Do you think Communist Party candidates should be allowed any time on the radio?

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Sep 1940	32%	55	13

B. In peacetime, do you think members of the Communist Party in this country should be allowed to speak on the radio?

	Yes	Yes Qualified	No	Undecided
Nov 1943	48%		40	12
Nov 1945	48%		39	13
Mar 1946[a]	45%		44	11
Apr 1948	36%		57	7
Nov 1953[a]	19%	9	68	4
Jan 1954[a]	14%	8	73	5
Jan 1956[a]	16%	6	76	3
Dec 1956[a]	20%	4	72	4
Apr 1957[a]	17%	5	75	3
Nov 1963[a]	18%	10	67	5

SOURCES: Roper Center; NORC codebooks; *Opinion News*, 15 September 1948, p. 11; Hyman and Sheatsley, 1953:8; Gallup, 1972:245.

[a] Question did not include the words "In peacetime."

Table 3B displays the results of one important series resulting from a question about allowing Communists to speak on the radio that was asked irregularly between 1943 and 1963. It turns out that during World War II considerable numbers of people said they would allow Communists to speak freely during peacetime; this level of tolerance for Communist speeches on the radio, in fact, was almost as high as tolerance for Communist speeches in the community in the 1970s (compare Table 1) when some allowance is made for different levels of no opinion response.[4] Of course, during the war the Soviets and domestic Communists were often seen as noble and heroic allies against Nazi Germany. Following the war there was a noticeable, but not precipitous, decline in tolerance which eventually bottomed out in the mid-1950s. These low levels of tolerance generally held through late 1963 when the question was last asked. This declining trend in tolerance between the 1940s and the 1950s is paralleled on other poll questions in which respondents were asked whether Socialists should be allowed to publish (Table 4A). More generally, there was also some decline in the percentage who would allow newspapers to criticize "our form of government" (Table 4B)—and possibly a decline in the percentage willing to allow people to "say anything" in a public speech (Table 4C).

While tolerance may have been relatively high during World War II, there is fragmentary evidence to suggest it was substantially lower just before the war in 1940. This can be concluded from the 1940 data in Table 3A, and also from the 1940 data in Table 5A, in which respondents were asked about allowing "speeches against democracy." In that year the Nazi–Soviet pact was in effect and the United States was in a kind of McCarthy era, except that the perceived threat to democracy came from two sources: the extreme left and the extreme right. The tolerance levels in 1940 for allowing antidemocratic speech making (Table 5A) and for letting Communists speak on the radio (Table 3A) are roughly similar to those measured by Stouffer in 1954 for Communist speech making (Table 1).

When the question in Table 5A was replicated in the 1970s, it generated results similar to those generated by the Stouffer question at that time (Table 1). Beyond that, the question comparison in Table 5 gives dramatic evidence about the importance of paying careful attention to question wording when dealing with civil liberties issues. Both in 1940 and in the replication in the 1970s, people were found to be far less willing to "forbid" speeches against democracy than they were to "not allow" them, an issue to be considered more fully below.

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[4] It should be stressed that all the data from the World War II period in Tables 3 and 4 are from questions in which the respondents were asked about allowing free speech *during peacetime*.

Table 4. Trends in Civil Liberties, 1943–1957

A. In peacetime, do you think the Socialist Party should be allowed to publish newspapers in this country?

	Yes	Yes Qualified	No	No Opinion
Nov 1943	57%		25	18
Nov 1945	58%		28	15
May 1953	45%	5	34	16
Jan 1954	41%	6	39	14
Jan 1956[a]	41%	6	40	13
Jan 1957[a]	47%	5	38	10
Apr 1957[a]	43%	5	39	13

B. In peacetime, do you think newspapers should be allowed to criticize our form of government?

	Yes	Yes Qualified	No	No Opinion
Nov 1943	66%		30	4
Nov 1945	64%		31	5
Apr 1948	70%		27	3
May 1953	54%	7	35	4

C. In peacetime, do you think people in this country should be allowed to say anything they want to in a public speech?

	Yes	Yes Qualified	No Qualified	No	No Opinion
Nov 1943	63%		32[b]	5	3
Nov 1945	64%			32	4
May 1953	53%	21		24	2
Nov 1954	56%	23		20	1

SOURCES: NORC codebooks; Erskine, 1970:486–487; Cantril and Strunk, 1951:245; Hyman and Sheatsley, 1953:15–16; Hyman, 1963:237.

NOTE: The "Yes qualified" answers include comments like "if fair," "if not Communist," "if not favoring violence," "if not treasonable," "if not libelous."

[a] Question did not include the words "In peacetime."

[b] Multiple answers accepted.

Table 5. The Forbid/Not Allow Questions

A. Do you think the United States should allow speeches against democracy?

	1940	Fall 1974	Feb 1976	Spring 1976
Yes, allow	21%	53%	50%	46%
No, not allow	62	42	42	42
Don't know	17	5	8	12

B. Do you think the United States should forbid speeches against democracy?

	1940	Fall 1974	Feb 1976	Spring 1976
No, don't forbid	39%	67%	75%	69%
Yes, forbid	46	26	19	19
Don't know	15	6	6	12

Sources: Rugg, 1941; Schuman and Presser, 1981:277; personal communication with Howard Schuman, 1983.

When the data from Tables 1, 3, 4, and 5 are combined into a single story, a pattern emerges that suggests a fair amount of fluctuation in attitudes toward free speech over a 45-year span. The pattern, in summary, is as follows:

1. In 1940, when internationally relevant subversive threats from right as well as left wing extremists were perceived, tolerance levels were probably quite low—almost as low as those registered during the McCarthy period (Tables 3A, 5A).

2. During World War II, the number of those who said they would tolerate Communist speech making during peacetime rose as the international entity to which the domestic party was linked became allied with the United States in a total war against a common enemy (Tables 3 and 4).[5]

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[5] Presumably, taking a leaf from the Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus argument, tolerance of Nazi or pro-Japanese speech at the time would have been found to be spectacularly less magnanimous had anybody bothered to ask about it. However, it seems likely that tolerance in general—that is, of the freedom to speak "against democracy" or to "say anything" (during peacetime)—*rose* between 1940 and the war years (compare the 1940 data in Table 5A with the 1943 data in Tables 4B and 4C).

3. After the war international Communism became a perceived threat as Cold War hostilities emerged and as various dramatic and highly publicized cases of Communist subversion, or alleged subversion, came to light: among them, the cases of Igor Gouzenko, Elizabeth Bentley, Klaus Fuchs, Alger Hiss, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. During this period, tolerance for Communist speech making eroded. Declining with it was tolerance for Socialist publication, and perhaps for the right to "say anything" and for newspapers to "criticize our form of government" (Tables 3 and 4).

4. These trends hit bottom in the 1950s with the Korean War and with the trial and execution of the Rosenbergs (1950–53); at this time the issue was extensively exploited by various politicians, of whom Joseph McCarthy is the best remembered (Tables 1, 3, and 4).

5. Tolerance of free speech for Communists remained at this low level at least until the end of 1963 (Table 3).

6. By 1972, tolerance for the civil liberties of Communists, Socialists, and atheists had risen sharply to levels comparable to those that prevailed during World War II (Table 1).

7. For the next 13 years tolerance for these groups and for other divergent groups has remained quite steady at this high level (Table 1 and note 2).

Explaining the Trends

This exercise in trend tracing suggests that there has been a considerable amount of fluctuation in political tolerance over the last half-century or so. Most of the measures involve free speech for Communists, but there are some data for other groups and for tolerance issues of a more general sort as well. Furthermore the measured upward shift in tolerance discussed so much in the literature occurred sometime during a relatively brief 8½-year period between late 1963 and spring 1972. These observations also suggest that it may be better to see the Stouffer shift of 1954–1972 not as a trend toward greater tolerance, but as a return to levels of tolerance that prevailed during World War II. What can explain this pattern? To approach this question, it would be useful to see if there are relevant trend lines that parallel the Stouffer pattern. In particular these trend lines should show (1) a substantial shift in opinion between the 1950s and the 1970s, and (2) little or only modest additional change during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Changes in educational or age levels. Although tolerance may be correlated with age and education, the Stouffer shift is not purely the result of changes in levels of education or in cohort shifts; if the shift occurred within 8½ years (rather than over 18 as is usually supposed) there was insufficient time for significant cohort changes to take place or for increased educational opportunities to have such substantial impact. This reasoning is in line with the analyses of Davis (1975), Cutler and Kaufman (1975), Nunn, Crockett, and Williams (1978), and Abramson (1983: chap. 14), which find the Stouffer shift (even assuming the change to have taken place over 18 years) to be significantly in excess of what could be explained by cohort or educational shifts, a conclusion also supported by Sullivan and his colleagues (1982: chap. 5). Also relevant are two observations: (1) tolerance levels have not increased much in the 13 years between 1972 and 1985, when any presumed cohort or educational change would have continued; and (2) tolerance levels *declined* between the early 1940s and the early 1950s even while education was expanding (on this point, see also Glazer and Lipset, 1955:151; and Stewart, 1967).

Changes in psychological factors. Several studies have linked political tolerance to various psychological factors such as optimism, self-esteem, rigidity, and dogmatism (see Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982: chap. 6; Zalkind, Gaugler, and Schwartz, 1975; Sniderman, 1975). These relationships seem valid, but insofar as data are available they do not seem to account for the Stouffer shift, since patterns on these psychological dimensions mostly either have not changed since the 1950s or have changed modestly in the wrong direction. Thus Nunn, Crockett, and Williams found no significant change from 1954 in the degree to which Americans were optimistic about their personal future or were more worried about "things" (1978:27–28.) In a more extensive analysis of these issues, Lipset and Schneider conclude that there have been no important shifts since the 1950s and early 1960s in the degree to which Americans feel happy, personally satisfied, or personally optimistic; if anything, there was a mild *decline* in their good feelings on these issues (1983:111–155). Moreover, there was a modest decline in the degree of personal trust among the American public while the sense of alienation has increased somewhat (Lipset and Schneider, 1983:109–111; see also Smith, 1980:219; Wright, 1976: chap. 7).[6]

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[6] Stouffer included a few personality items on his survey, and four were replicated on the Nunn survey in 1973. It was found that the percentage agreeing that "Any leader should be strict with people under him in order to gain their respect" declined only 3 points, while the percentage agreeing that "People can be divided into two classes—the weak and the strong" declined 8 points. For what it's worth, larger changes were found in two questions about child rearing: agreement with the statement "A child should never be allowed to talk back to parents, or else he will lose respect for them" declined 14 points, and those agreeing that "If a child is unusual in some way, his parents should get him to be more like other children" declined 38 points (Stouffer codebook; personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 1983).

Changes in political efficacy and trust. As for measures of more specifically political attitudes, Lipset and Schneider document several trends in the direction opposite to the tolerance trend: the sense of political efficacy lessened somewhat between the 1950s and the 1970s, and there were marked declines in the degree to which Americans trusted the government, valued the performance of the government and the behavior of public officials, and expressed confidence in the leaders not only of Congress and the executive branch, but also in those of medicine, education, organized religion, the courts, business, labor, the press, the military, and the Supreme Court (1983:19–61).

Changes in attitudes on relevent political issues. Trends on two specific political issues might be expected to have some resonance with political tolerance. Neither does. One is civil rights. Since the 1950s and early 1960s there has clearly been a substantial liberalization of attitudes toward racial integration, particularly toward the principles of equal treatment. However, unlike attitudes on political tolerance, this liberalization trend generally *continued* through the 1970s rather than reaching a plateau (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, 1985; see also Taylor, Sheatsley, and Greeley, 1978; Smith, 1980:162–174; Smith and Sheatsley, 1984; and a Harris Survey release, 18 February 1985). The other concerns criminal justice. In this area there has been a considerable *deliberalization:* in the 1970s, people became far more likely to advocate the death penalty and to feel the courts are insufficiently harsh on criminals. Not irrelevantly, they were also found to be increasingly fearful of walking near their homes alone at night (Smith, 1980:18–19, 41–42, 52–53).

Changes in international attitudes. Other potentially relevant questions deal with the Cold War and with attitudes toward the Soviet Union. There was a big change in this between the 1950s and the 1970s; for example, Americans tended to rate Russia around 85%–91% unfavorable in the 1950s, while far fewer people were so negative in the 1970s. However, unlike the tolerance questions, questions like this were remarkably volatile in the 1970s: the portion unfavorably inclined varied actively between 30% and 73% during the 1972–1982 decade, while the portion finding Communism to be the "worst kind" of government rose substantially during the decade, from 44% to 61% (Smith, 1983:280–281; Russett and Deluca, 1981:389–391).

Changes in concern about domestic Communism. Although data are not as abundant as one might like, the questions which do seem to show the proper patterns are those dealing with concern over domestic Communism. In Stouffer's 1954 survey 81% felt American Communists to be of very great, great, or some danger to the country; in a replication in 1974 this dropped to 65%, a figure which held firm at least through 1976 (Smith, 1983:289). In 1954, 35% claimed they had recently talked with friends or relatives about "Communists in the United States"; in 1973 that figure was 16% (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978:30).[7] In replicating three Stouffer items in 1973, Nunn, Crockett, and Williams found 20% calling Communists in government a "great danger" where Stouffer had found 33% expressing this degree of alarm; for Communists in defense plants the decline was from 39% to 21%; for Communists in college teaching, however, the decline was smaller—from 32% to 26%—even though the data in Table 1 show the public to have become far less willing to fire Communist teachers (Stouffer codebook; personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 1983).

What happened sometime during the late 1960s and early 1970s, then, was a notable decline in concern over domestic Communism, and this seems to be related to an increased willingness to tolerate Communist expression, even as the increased concern over subversion by domestic Communists presumably led to a decreased tolerance in the decade after World War II. This observation accords well with common sense—it was during the late 1960s and early 1970s that various anti-Communist measures adopted in the McCarthy era were calmly dismantled by the courts and Congress to remarkably little protest. As concern diminished, tolerance for Communist speech rose, apparently to a sort of plateau at about the level achieved during World War II when domestic Communism also seemed relatively benign. It has remained at that level ever since.

The data in Table 6 help to illustrate these trends. They reflect the amount of press attention given domestic Communism over the last 45 years. Substantial attention in the immediate prewar years dwindled during the war to almost nothing. A crescendo after 1945 peaked between 1950 (the year of Korea and the McCarran Act) and 1954, McCarthy's (and Stouffer's) year of maximum attention. The table also documents the oft-forgotten fact that substantial press attention to the issue (reflecting in part various anti-Communist crusading movements of the time) lasted until well into the 1960s. Finally, attention plummeted in the late 1960s to levels not seen since 1943; so when researchers again turned their attention to civil liberties attitudes in 1972, domestic Communism had become one of the great nonissues of American politics.[8]

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[7] Actually, the difference is probably even greater. Stouffer asked if these conversations had occurred "in the last week or so"; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams asked about "the last few weeks or so." Both numbers seem unrealistically high.

[8] It does not seem possible to determine exactly when in the period between the early 1960s and 1972 the shift took place, but some evidence suggests it may have been mostly concentrated in the early 1970s. A survey in 1965 found 89% feeling that members of the Communist party do more harm than good to "American life"; in 1969 this still held at

Table 6. Items in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature

	Communism–US	Communist Party–US		Communism–US	Communist Party–US
1940	26	16	1963	7	5
1941	38	11	1964	14	9
1942	12	2	1965	20	9
1943	2	6	1966	10	8
1944	10	6	1967	10	4
1945	9	8	1968	6	4
1946	16	14	1969	3	4
1947	58	17	1970	5	2
1948	62	21	1971	1	3
1949	73	18	1972	0	1
1950	146	12	1973	0	5
1951	58	29	1974	0	1
1952	80	7	1975	0	2
1953	144	15	1976	0	0
1954	170	33	1977	0	2
1955	86	21	1978	0	2
1956	23	32	1979	0	0
1957	29	34	1980	0	5
1958	19	6	1981	0	4
1959	27	11	1982	0	3
1960	25	3	1983	0	5
1961	37	15	1984	0	3
1962	30	9	1985	1	0

To a degree these observations applying comparisons in trend data are in agreement with the conclusion of Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, who mostly rely on the analysis of a single survey: "tolerance . . . of communists has increased primarily because they are not perceived as less dangerous and threatening than they were in the 1950s" (1979b:789). One of the factors they find "most strongly and consis-

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85%, but by 1973 it had dropped to 72% (Erskine and Siegel, 1975:26). Some fragmentary additional evidence can be arrayed. On national surveys conducted in 1970, some rather strongly intolerant opinion was voiced: 52% would ban "newspapers which preach revolution" (Erskine and Siegel, 1975:25), while 53% would not allow "books attacking our system of government" and 62% would not allow "speeches against God" (Wilson, 1975:71). Variations in question wording make comparison exceedingly difficult, but these numbers do seem quite high compared to the 1972 figures in Table 1 and thus suggest a considerable shift in the 1970–72 period. See also Jennings and Niemi, 1981:414.

tently related to tolerance'' is ''perceptions of threat'': ''the greater the perceived threat from a group, the more likely a person is to be intolerant of the group'' (1982:251).[9] However, the method Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus use to arrive at this conclusion is less than convincing. They measure perceived threat not with direct questions on the issue, but by a scale derived from a factor analysis of responses to adjective pairs that respondents were asked to use to describe their least-liked group. One of the six pairs on this scale, safe/dangerous, may reflect threat, as perhaps does nonviolent/violent. But the others were honest/dishonest, trustworthy/untrustworthy, predictable/unpredictable, and good/bad.[10] Why this scale is said to be a specific measure of ''perceived threat'' rather than, say, ''perceived badness,'' is far from clear. Though threat may be part of the mix, the variable seems essentially to measure degree of dislike, and to find that it correlates tenaciously with intolerance (those who most dislike a disliked group are also most likely to be intolerant of it) is not very surprising.

However, although the Sullivan study uses a dubious method for measuring threat, the trend parallels explored here do suggest that its conclusion about the importance of perceived threat is very likely to be sound. On the other hand, this analysis parts company with Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus when they argue that ''citizens are now able to point to other political groups toward which they feel more hostility, and which they regard as more threatening'' (1982:69), or when they assert that intolerance has ''merely been turned toward new targets'' (1979b:792). It seems, rather, that intolerance has *not* been retargeted. Essentially, the argument seems to assume that Americans have a certain bundle of intolerance to distribute; if the targets of that intolerance cease to be threatening enough to deserve their intolerance, people will shop around for other targets on which to vent their intolerance. The analysis here, by contrast, suggests that that intolerance can fade with the threat unless some other similarly threatening group emerges to fill the vacuum.[11] No groups currently fill this bill—not even those asked about on the Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus study's list. And thus intolerance has declined since the 1950s—though the potential for its reemergence is always there.

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[9] Stouffer observed the same thing, though he found it ''far from a 1-to-1 relationship'' (1955: chap. 8).

[10] See Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982:187–194. All six pairs weighed in at about the same level on the factor except for the ''predictable/unpredictable'' item, which had a lower loading.

[11] This suggests that Stouffer may have been a bit too concerned when he concluded that intolerance may be too ''deeply rooted'' to be ''responsive to a merely *negative* information program which minimizes the Communist risk, even if the facts should justify such an interpretation of the risk'' (1955:193, emphasis in the original).

Conclusions and Speculations

Although hatred and perceptions of threat may never be entirely separable, it seems useful to differentiate two kinds of intolerance. On the one hand, one can be intolerant out of hatred or simply because one doesn't want to hear certain things—that some races are inferior, for example, or that America is rotten or that God is dead or that Hitler was a saint. On the other hand, one can be intolerant because one believes an undesirable group to be a potential practical risk; the most dangerous would be a subversive group allied with a foreign power whose goal is to undermine the government.

The only significant groups in recent decades which fit the second category have been the American Nazi party, the American Communist party (and, for some, domestic Japanese during World War II), and any groups seen to be close allies of these. The Nazis ceased to be a realistic threat in 1945 when their foreign ally was defeated, and the evidence suggests that the fear of domestic Communism waned substantially after the 1950s, leading, sensibly enough, to an increase in tolerance. No foreign-related groups of that sort have emerged toward which one can redirect one's fear-induced intolerance.[12]

This dynamic seems to be the dominating one in tolerance levels as usually measured in the polls. As the fear of Communism has waxed and waned, not only has tolerance of domestic Communists changed, but tolerance of other political groups like Socialists (seen to be associated by the public) has apparently been swept along. It may even be that agreement with certain somewhat general democratic principles follows as part of the package, though evidence on this is extremely fragmentary.[13] But it does seem that attitudes on tolerance move in packs or clusters. As fear of a putatively subversive group changes, attitudes about tolerating that group change in consonance, and tolerance levels for associated, but nonsubversive, groups are carried along with it. An analogy can be found in the study by Lipset and Schneider of the "confidence gap." They document a decline in the last two decades in confidence in institutions and in the people running them, and trace this loss of confidence to events like Vietnam, Watergate, racial difficulties, and, later, to the lackluster performance of the economy. Yet the decline in confidence is universal: it is directed not only at the presumably blameworthy leaders and institutions in politics, the military, and business, but also at such (comparative) innocents as educators, religious figures, the press, and medicine (1983: chap. 2). The phenomenon is a sort of public-opinion fellow traveling: ritualistic, considerably indiscriminate, and quite unfair.[14]

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[12] To a degree, the relative intolerance of the early 1950s might be seen as a sort of induced war situation. During war, civil liberties concerning the enemy are often substantially curtailed, and in the Korean War years many felt the United Stated was in, or nearly in, World War III. Fear of war with the Soviet Union and (therefore) of its domestic subversive ally continued into the 1960s, until the mellowing of the Cold War (see Mueller, 1973: chap. 3, 1977, 1979).

[13] As noted earlier, general acceptance of free speech and free press seems to have risen between 1940 and the war years (note 5), then perhaps to have declined in the 1950s (Table 4). Then the Nunn replication of the Stouffer study in 1973 found an increase from 32% to 70% in those agreeing that it is important "to protect the rights of innocent people even if some Communists are not found out" (Stouffer codebooks; personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 1983). There also appears to have been a simultaneous liberalization of opinion on another issue: "Any person who hides behind the laws when he is questioned about his activities doesn't deserve much consideration" apparently found notably less agreement in 1978 than in 1958, though other such "principles of democracy" do not show much change (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982:203).

As Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus have carefully and thoughtfully noted, it should not be assumed attitudes measured on polls necessarily predict or even reflect behavior (1982:49–50, 251; see also Lawrence, 1976; Zellman, 1975; Gibson and Bingham, 1982). For example, people who say that atheists should be forbidden to speak may not be moved to do anything about it should such speeches be announced. But if this point is going to be made, it does not seem reasonable to conclude with Sullivan and his colleagues that "most Americans are intolerant of some groups" (1982:252). If Americans (1) say they sup-

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14. That there may have been at least some increase in tolerance since the 1950s not linked to changed fear of domestic Communism is suggested by statistics about atheists: tolerance for them has gone up nearly 30 percentage points, as much as for Communists. Some of this may be due to the fact that religion has waned somewhat as a force since the 1950s (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978:127–139), so there may be a specific mellowing of anti-atheistic feeling separate from, but parallel to, the decline in urgent anti-Communism.

However, there is a problem in assessing this issue because Stouffer asked about "people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people. For instance, somebody who is against all churches and religion" (for an interesting dissection of this question, see Schuman and Presser, 1981:289–292). He wasn't asking so much about an atheist as about a religion-threatener, and for many people that may sound a lot like a Communist. Indeed, when he asked, "What things do Communists believe in?" the most common single response (24%) was that they were "against religion" (1955:166). Moreover, Stouffer asked the atheist questions well before he asked about Communists, and so a distinction between the two would not have been suggested to the respondents. That "religion-threateners" are substantially less desirable than "atheists" is suggested by some evidence from the Sullivan study: only 15% selected atheists as their first or second least-liked group, while fully 48% chose Communists (1982:86), yet people were almost as willing in later questions to restrict the freedom of religion-threateners as they were that of Communists.

This problem is certainly confounding, but it may not be devastating. Gallup has asked several times about voting for an atheist for president, and those favorable rose from 18% in 1958 to 40% in 1978 and 42% in 1983 (*Gallup Report*, September 1983, p. 13). Thus substantially increased tolerance for "atheists" as well as "religion-threateners" does seem to be documented. However, if there is an upward trend for atheists separate from those that cluster around the Communist issue, it is odd that there has been little or no further movement in the trend since 1972 (see note 2). Real independence should be made of sterner stuff.

port free speech, (2) say they would deny this freedom to certain groups, but (3) do nothing to prevent these groups from speaking (beyond negative mutterings when queried about it in public opinion surveys), then it seems fairest to say that their behavior is best predicted by their verbal support of the principle of free speech, and thus that they are overwhelmingly tolerant (on this point, see also Glazer and Lipset, 1955:143).

It might be useful to push this consideration one step further. In some respects it seems that the data not only fail to reflect behavior, they also fail to reflect *attitude* very well. Or, to put it directly, on questions of tolerance and civil liberties—that is, on some of the basic issues on which the theory of democracy is founded—it may be most useful for some purposes to assume that no attitude worthy of the name exists (see also Converse, 1964, 1970). Rather than concluding that "most people are intolerant," it may be best to conclude that most people have no attitude on this issue that is meaningfully measureable by public opinion polls.

Consider, first of all, the data in Table 5. Measured "opinion" on a central question about free speech has repeatedly been manipulated by some 20 or 25 percentage points by merely altering the tone of the question.[15]

A second area concerns data about attitude consistency. Much research has shown that survey respondents overwhelmingly voice agreement with statements stating democratic principles but then calmly refuse to grant these rights to noncentrist groups (Prothro and Grigg, 1960; McClosky, Hoffman, and O'Hara, 1960; McClosky, 1964). Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus stress that abstract principles and specific applications may often "bring into play competing values" and thus seeming inconsistencies are not necessarily all that unreasonable (1982:36–43; see also McClosky and Brill, 1983:431–434). This is a most useful observation, but even taking this caveat into account, there is still a great deal of data that seems quite startling. For example, the Sullivan survey found 85% in agreement with the statement "I believe in free speech for all no matter what their views might be"; yet on the *very next question* only 63% said they would allow a person to make a speech against churches and religion. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the "principles of democracy" so queried about are, for many, just so many civics lesson platitudes, barren of tangible content. A survey in an Orwellian world could be expected to find principles like "slavery is freedom" as emptily and mechanically accepted.

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[15] In further experiments on this question Schuman and Presser find that when the vague "speeches against democracy" is replaced by the somewhat more specific "speeches in favor of Communism," the forbid/not allow difference remains, though lessened somewhat. However, when the question asks about things much closer to everyday humdrum reality (showing X-rated movies, advertising cigarettes on television), the forbid/not allow difference is reduced substantially (1981:276–283; see also Hippler and Schwarz, 1986).

Then there is the fact that even in the McCarthy-free 1970s and 1980s, surveys have repeatedly found that over 20% of the public says they are unwilling to allow any given unorthodox group the right to speak, even when that group is as politically benign as homosexuals, people who advocate government ownership of industry and the railroads, or people whose loyalty has been questioned but deny this under oath.[16] A fair interpretation of these data, of course, would be that there is an irreducible minimum of resentment and intolerance toward any given off-center group, but the data also foster the suspicion that there is in the response to such questions a certain amount of casual caprice and amiable randomness.

Finally there is Stouffer's odd finding in the depths (or heights) of the McCarthy era that his respondents seemed to be utterly unworried either about Communism or about threats to civil liberties. Asked "What kinds of things worry you most?" less than 1% mentioned either the threat of domestic Communism or concern about civil liberties. Even when specifically asked for their worries about "political or world problems," only 6% mentioned the Communist threat and only 2% mentioned concerns about civil liberties (1955:59–70). Then when Stouffer asked "Do you happen to know the names of any of the Senators or Congressmen" taking "a leading part" in "investigations of Communism," 30% could come up with no names, and only 13% volunteered the name of more than one.[17] In a Gallup poll of March 1952 (AIPO 488), respondents were asked what they worried about. So few mentioned domestic Communism that no coding category includes that worry. When they were asked what they wanted presidential candidates to talk about that year, less than 2% mentioned domestic Communism. When asked what they hoped the next president would do "to help you or people like yourself," less than 2% mentioned Communism. When asked for "some of the things" the president should do "for the good of the country," 4% included Communism in their list. However, when they were actually given a prepared list of "things the next president may try to do" and asked to choose two or three that "would be best for you," 36% managed to select "clean out Communism in the country."

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[16] For example, in 1954 about 20% of the population would have an accused Communist fired from a defense job, fired from teaching college or high school, forbidden to speak, and would remove his book from the public library; when Nunn, Crockett, and Williams replicated these questions in 1973, almost exactly the same results were obtained.

[17] Despite the existence of well-established data like these, commentators are *still* fond of using the word "hysteria" when referring to the McCarthy era.

Although there are other areas in which the polls show opinion to be quite volatile, it certainly seems from these considerations that the issue of civil liberties is one that enjoys little salience—it almost seems that the only time many people consider the subject is when they are being queried about it in public opinion surveys. And perhaps this is quite understandable. Intellectuals who study tolerance and civil liberties have a strong interest in free inquiry, as do members of the democratic political elite, who may conclude that free speech helps preserve their right to speak their minds when out of power. But unlike these minorities, most people never say anything that anyone else—even the most paranoid of dictators—would want to suppress.[18]

To be sure, the polls are measuring *something* when they ask about civil liberties, and the results do seem to hang together pretty well. As demonstrated above, trends in tolerance for Communist speech do follow patterns that make sense in general: people picked up the cues (domestic Communists are threatening, domestic Communists are not so threatening) and were able to deduce the current correct response to feed back to the interviewers.[19] And some other comfortable regularities have been noted in the literature—the tendency for the well-educated to be more tolerant, for example, and for the more-threatened to be less tolerant. But the polls also suggest that it may be far too grand and generous to believe there is anything like a real, tangible "attitude about" or "commitment to" or "hostility toward" civil liberties one way or the other. Even a word like "apathy," as suggested by Prothro and Grigg (1960) and McClosky (1964:374–376), may be too strong when referring to public opinion in this area, since it implies people have attitudes even if they fail to act on them. Indeed, the notion that an effective, mob-like "tyranny of the majority" could actually coalesce on civil liberties issues may well need reexamination. More to be feared is a tyranny of a few who obtain bland acquiescence from the uninterested, and essentially unaffected, many.

[18] Of the 13% who told Stouffer in 1954 that they felt less free to speak their minds than they used to, almost half said "this does not bother me." Bizarrely, in the Nunn, Crockett, and Williams replication of 1973, 20% (*more* than in 1954) said they felt less free to speak their minds than they used to.

[19] Other countries show shifts on such matters that are truly massive. Hitler seems to have had a fair amount of popular support while in power, but when his brutal, totalitarian regime was abruptly replaced by a democracy, the same people now found they could get along quite well in this new form of government. Spain and Portugal form more recent examples, while Czechoslovakia (1948) and Chile may furnish examples of shifts in the opposite direction. It is the message of the classic film documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity* that most of the French population adjusted comfortably to German occupation during World War II. When popular opposition to a suppressive government does boil up (as in contemporary Poland) the opposition seems far more likely to be motivated by economics, religion, ethnicity, or nationalism than by concerns over civil liberties. For comparative studies of civil liberties attitudes, see Caspi and Seligson, 1983; Muller, Personen, and Jukam, 1980; Shamir and Sullivan, 1983.

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A NOTE ON "TRENDS IN POLITICAL TOLERANCE"

JOHN L. SULLIVAN AND
GEORGE E. MARCUS

John Mueller has argued that attitudes toward political rights for Communists, examined over the historical period from the 1950s to the 1970s, contradicts our conclusion that levels of tolerance have probably not changed a great deal. He suggests that our content-controlled results are not well suited to support our conclusions. We relied on the content-controlled measurement strategy because the conceptualization of political tolerance that we found most apt postulates that questions of tolerance do not come into play unless one seriously objects to a political group (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982:2–10). An individual's attitudes toward the civil liberties of a particular political group can reflect actual support of that group (a positive predisposition toward the group and its ideas) or indifference (including "not caring much one way or the other") as well as the more commonly analyzed responses of tolerance and intolerance.

Our conceptualization of tolerance dictated that tolerance is only at issue for someone in the presence of serious dislike and objection. We therefore used the content-controlled strategy to take account of the expectation that one particular stimulus group would not (indeed could not) provide the same test of political tolerance for all respondents. Attitudes toward each group could, in theory, vary from strongly positive through neutral to strongly negative. Given the kinds of groups we and others studied in most instances, these attitudes would tend to range from indifference through dislike. The point here is that the meaning of our results must be understood within the framework of our conceptualization of tolerance. As a result, our findings are not easily compared with those derived from either a different conceptualization of political tolerance, or in the case of much empirical research, in the absence of an explicit conceptualization of tolerance.

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Our own discussion of the meaning of tolerance led to the conclusion that traditional approaches, which specify a particular target group, or set of target groups, and then obtain measures of all respondents' willingness to allow the specified groups to exercise their political rights and liberties, produce invalid measures. Some of the respondents have positive, not just negative or neutral, attitudes toward the stimulus groups. For example, in a study of the British electorate (Barnum and Sullivan, 1987) rather large percentages of respondents express either neutral ("no strong feelings") or positive attitudes toward the ten extremist groups studied. Percentages ranged from a low of about 11% for fascists to a high of about 64% for both anti- and pro-abortionists, and 61% for the campaign for nuclear disarmament. Almost one of four respondents (24%) expressed indifference or liking for Communists. And we might note that these percentages were calculated on the entire sample, including those who refused or were unable to answer a question about a particular group. The percentages would be even larger if we calculated them based only on the respondents who answered the like–dislike questions.

At a minimum, researchers must assess the degree of objection (ranging from liking through neutrality to disliking) that each respondent harbors toward the target group being studied. Because he cannot and does not establish a requisite degree of objection, Mueller must assume that all respondents hold similar levels of dislike of the Communists and the other groups studied in the data he analyzes. If this assumption is incorrect, then his measures are invalid for measuring political tolerance as we have conceptualized it. If he has an alternative conceptualization which would establish that his measures are valid, he has not yet provided it.

As a number of analyses have demonstrated, the Stouffer-like questions analyzed by Mueller measure two sets of factors, group factors and act factors (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982). Feldman (1987) has shown that the GSS data cannot be properly analyzed without distinguishing between the groups and the acts being studied. His interpretation of the group factors differs somewhat from ours, but supports our contention that variance on the Stouffer-like questions used by the GSS cannot be attributed solely to variations in tolerance. Feldman (1987:10) concludes that "the improvement in fit [of the group and act eight-factor model] shows that the simpler models fail to adequately represent the response process for these questions." Feldman also shows that respondents' systematic responses to the Stouffer items are primarily generated by their specific reactions to the groups used as stimuli rather than "considerations of specific activities engaged in." Gibson and Anderson (1984) and Gibson and Wenzel (1987) also show that a single factor model is not accurate. These studies uniformly show that the Stouffer items are powerfully affected by attitudes toward the stimulus group. Thus the implicit single factor model (that answers to these questions are determined by a single factor, tolerance) used by Mueller is confounded and does not fit the actual response patterns in the GSS data.

We do not mean to argue that the content-controlled measurement strategy is the only valid way to measure political tolerance. As in most social science research, there are many valid measures that could be used. As long as the methodology incorporates the condition that an objection must be established before support (or lack of support) for the rights and liberties of the groups in question can be assessed, a measure has some degree of validity. If one wanted to weigh the amount of intolerance at any historical moment then we concede that our procedure is not a fully sufficient methodology. A better estimate would require that a study identify the level of objection to which the issue of tolerance applies, then identify for each respondent all groups that are at or beyond that level of objection. For each respondent who identifies at least one target group, one would have to ascertain how tolerant they would be for each of the identified groups and then develop a summary score. We chose the "least-liked" procedure to ensure that the respondent was put in the proper context to which the assessment of tolerance applies so that we could account for individual differences. Lawrence's (1976) analysis attempts this, as does a recent project assessing political tolerance in England (Barnum and Sullivan, 1987). But Mueller does not address these conceptual, theoretical, and measurement issues. As a result, his procedure for estimating tolerance, absent any identification of objection to Communists, and focused exclusively on Communists, is even less appropriate as a procedure for estimating the total intolerance in a society.

In this vein, the author's comments about the incomparability of our data and approach with Stouffer's are useful. Our conceptualization of political tolerance dictated the percentages we used in our analysis, reported in part in Mueller's Table 2—respondents who do not object to any group whatsoever cannot be tolerant or intolerant since their tolerance can only be tested, according to our understanding of tolerance, if they harbor serious objections. These respondents are perhaps best considered indifferent, rather than either tolerant or intolerant. Thus in calculating the percentage tolerant, we included them in the base but did not count them as tolerant since they were not tolerant but indifferent by our conceptualization. We cannot agree with Mueller that these respondents should be excluded from the computations. They are in fact part of the electorate, and they are not tolerant by our conceptualization. These respondents do not strongly object to any political group, and so cannot be judged tolerant even if they accept the rights of various political groups.

Our mistake (and Mueller's as well) was in trying to make comparisons with Stouffer's results. Given our conceptualization, it is probably most accurate to say that our percentage tolerant and intolerant cannot, in a strict sense, be compared with Stouffer's tolerant and intolerant percentages. Mueller agrees that providing the no opinion option is essential, and as he notes, Stouffer did not offer that option. Mueller leaves the impression that the only evidence we used to conclude that levels of tolerance had not risen nearly so much as others had claimed was a direct comparison of results using the Stouffer questions with those using the least-liked questions. However, we bolstered our argument by conducting a SIFASP analysis (simultaneous factor analysis of separate populations) for the 1954 Stouffer data and 1974 NORC General Social Survey which contained identical Stouffer items.[1] The advantage of this procedure, over a comparison of percentages, is that the group and act factors are separated, as noted above (see Gibson and Anderson, 1984; Gibson and Wenzel, 1987; Feldman, 1987). In that analysis, we discovered that the changes in response patterns for the nine Stouffer items between 1954 and 1974 could be explained solely as a result of changes in the extent to which respondents distinguished among the three target groups—Communists, Socialists, and atheists—and not as a result of changes in respondents' attitudes toward the acts of speechmaking, teaching, or allowing books in libraries. In the 1950s, when the Red Scare was in full flower and domestic Communists were under attack, respondents' answers to the questions were strongly affected by whether the stimulus was Communists, Socialists, or atheists. In the 1970s, when the issue of domestic Communism had been long dormant, respondents' answers were much less affected by which of the three group stimuli were used in a question. We relied on two analyses for our conclusions that the change in attitudes of tolerance between the 1950s and 1970s was overstated by previous authors. The historical data presented by the author are interesting, but if one accepts our theoretical analysis, then they show changes in attitudes toward Communists over time and not changes in political tolerance over time.

The cross-national analysis (Sullivan et al., 1985) presents a demonstration of the importance of measuring political tolerance the way we do. It makes little sense to compare American and, for example, Scandinavian attitudes toward Communists and Socialists and claim to have compared their levels of political tolerance. These political groups have entirely different meaning to the people in the U.S. than they do to citizens in Scandinavia. We must establish some sort of "objection" criterion, and the "least-liked" or some comparable measurement technique can then be used to compare attitudes of tolerance. If that is so across nations, it is also so across different types of respondents within a country, and even across different time periods within a country. Therefore, Mueller either cannot make the types of over-time comparisons he is making, or he must qualify them by making it clear that he is analyzing changes in attitudes toward Communists, not changes in tolerance. In his presentation, he often draws more general conclusions about tolerance when he is really describing changing attitudes toward groups.

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[1] SIFASP is a computer program developed by Jöreskog for covariance analysis using different populations. SIFASP has since been superseded by and incorporated into LISREL.

The importance of the above point is illustrated quite well in some research a colleague has recently completed in Israel. Members of Knesset were interviewed and asked some Stouffer-like questions about Arabs, as well as questions using the content-controlled approach. These two measures of tolerance correlated at exactly .00. In the Stouffer-type question about Arabs, most of the left-wing Members of Knesset appear to be tolerant, the right-wing Members of Knesset intolerant. However, using the least-liked group approach, there is little if any connection between tolerance and ideology because many of the left-wingers select Kach (Rabbi Kahane's group of nationalistic right-winters) and are strongly intolerant of it. The result is a null relationship between the two approaches (Shamir, 1986; Shamir and Sullivan, 1987). Because the operationalizations are empirically unrelated, one should avoid the confusion introduced by referring to both as political tolerance.

Given the fact that totally different results are obtained using the two different sets of operations, which is to be preferred? We argue that our conceptualization is more meaningful and that the least-liked approach is a more valid measurement of this conceptualization than the more content-biased Stouffer questions. Mueller's results in Tables 1, 3, and 4 are misleading. His analysis is analogous to comparing attitudes toward Arabs among Israeli Jews over time and making the claim that tolerance in Israel has therefore been compared over time.

Mueller claims that our view can be summarized as follows: "Americans have a certain bundle of intolerance to distribute . . . [and] will shop around for other targets on which to vent their intolerance." We did indeed find (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982; Sullivan et al., 1985) that one major source of intolerance in all three nations studied was a dogmatic, insecure personality. As a result, we do conclude that some respondents are generally dogmatic and would "find" a target group under most circumstances. This is true even in New Zealand, a country with few realistic threats and a high level of tolerant opinion. But other factors influence intolerance, including (lack of) support for democratic norms, and the degree of perceived threat. These are influenced by civic education, the political climate, and the political context generally (Sullivan et al., 1985:207–227). We did conclude that large segments of the American public are less tolerant today than they appear to be because the salient targets for their intolerance are more diverse than they were in the 1950s and hence studying the target groups of the 1950s in the 1970s and 1980s will overstate levels of tolerance. We also concluded that changing historical circumstances can lead to changing levels of political tolerance, but unlike Stouffer, we did not conclude that this will be an inevitable increase resulting from improving levels of education and other progressive changes in society. Changes in historical and political circumstances affect levels of political tolerance, and future historical circumstances may produce increased intolerance.

Mueller claims that no similarly threatening group has emerged to fill the vacuum left by the Communists and their sympathizers. But our analysis of threat indicates that Americans' levels of threat during the 1970s were very high—as high as that expressed by Israelis and much higher than that shown by New Zealand respondents. These high levels of perceived threat appear to help sustain a relatively high level of intolerance among the American public.

Mueller does not accept our measures of threat as valid, and therefore would not accept the above points. Our factor analysis shows that all of the adjective pairs he mentions load very highly on the same factor. Since safe/dangerous has the highest loading on the factor and is therefore the best one to emphasize in "naming" the factor, we concluded that "perceived threat" was a good label for it. The same measures of threat were used in the three-nation study (Sullivan et al., 1985) with similar results. A related point is Mueller's claim that this factor really measures perceived badness or degree of dislike and thus it is not surprising that it correlates so well with tolerance. He seems to imply that it is almost tautological. Our own view is that although this represents an affective factor, it is one based on fear and threat. Fear of these groups, and the threat they pose, may lead one to dislike them a great deal, but the basis of the affect is the perception of threat. One major problem with Mueller's view is that although political tolerance in all three countries studied correlates very strongly with measures of personality, support for the general norms of democracy, and political ideology, in none of them did our measures of threat correlate significantly with these other variables. If threat is virtually synonymous with tolerance, then it ought to correlate with the same variables as tolerance.

In sum, we find Mueller's research to be persuasive in arguing that attitudes toward Communists have changed over time. We find his claims regarding the levels or structure of political tolerance to be less persuasive.

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FROM OBEDIENCE TO AUTONOMY
CHANGES IN TRAITS DESIRED IN CHILDREN, 1924–1978

DUANE F. ALWIN

Abstract This paper presents results from a comparison of data on the traits desired in children from the Lynds' studies of Muncie (Middletown), Indiana, in the 1920s with similar data collected in a 1978 replication of the Lynds' work by Caplow et al. (1982). These results indicate that major changes have occurred in the most preferred qualities of children over this century, providing relatively strong evidence of changes in parent–child relations over this period. These patterns suggest that adult preferences for child qualities in contemporary society give more emphasis to qualities linked to the autonomy of children, whereas earlier desiderata stressed greater obedience to institutional and adult authority. These trends are interpreted in terms of changing relationships in the family and in the context of the response of the family to social, economic, and demographic changes during the twentieth century.

This paper focuses upon changes in parent–child relationships in U.S. society over the twentieth century. The principle vehicle for this analysis consists of data from the Middletown studies of the 1920s carried out by Helen and Robert Lynd in Muncie, Indiana, and data from a

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1978 replication of the Middletown studies conducted by Caplow and others (Caplow et al., 1982; Caplow, Bahr, and Chadwick, 1983). The Lynds (1929) asked a sample of Muncie women residents ($N = 141$) to rate each of several characteristics presented to them according to their emphasis in training their children. They also asked the women to rate the same traits in terms of how they believed their mother would have rated them some thirty years earlier. In 1978 Caplow, Bahr, and Chadwick asked another sample of Muncie women ($N = 333$) very similar questions, including the perceived ratings their mothers would have given the presented qualities. Some of these results were reported by Caplow and Chadwick (1979:382–383), but these data have not been systematically analyzed as indicators of social change. In this paper I present a detailed investigation of the changes in responses to the Lynds' questions over this time period.

The Lynds' Analysis of Child Rearing

One of the major areas covered by the Lynds' *Middletown* was the interpretation of the implications of social change for the family, particularly the orientations of parents to their children (see especially pp. 131–152).[1] Aware of the technological transformation of the American midwest during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they reported the Middletown of the 1920s to be vastly different from that of the earlier century. Whereas the traditional Middletown gave emphasis to the importance of child bearing, important for the agrarian economy of the late-nineteenth-century Indiana, the "urban" Middletown of the 1920s, having shifted in its technological base, showed evidence of a greater emphasis on child rearing (p. 131), that is, an emphasis on providing for children in a way that would enhance their development.[2] Declining fertility and a changing economy were seen as critical factors in understanding the conditions of family life that shaped parental orientations and differentially affected the experiences of children.

The Lynds observed that the traditional conception of child rearing in the late nineteenth century consisted primarily of "making children conform to the approved ways of the group" (p. 132), securing the maximum obedience from them. The Middletown of the 1920s, by contrast, was seen as more differentiated in its orientation toward children, and the family was viewed as a less potent force in securing adherence to "established group sanctions" (p. 133). The concerns of parents in the 1920s, as described by the Lynds, were with the fact that their children had too much independence. They note that with "the diminishing place of the home in the life of the child" comes the greater "sophistication of social life" (p. 135). For older children, issues of curfew, time spent alone with members of the opposite sex (especially in the automobile), the changing dress and "aggressiveness" of teenage girls, and the general issue of parental authority in the lives of young persons were matters worthy of note (pp. 135–152).

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[1] All page references in this section of the paper are to Lynd and Lynd, 1929.

[2] The Lynds remarked that "one cannot talk with Middletown mothers without being continually impressed by the eagerness of many to lay hold of every available resource for help in training their children" (p. 149).

In sum, the Lynds observed considerable social change between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, and they expected these trends to continue into the following decades. Their theme of "modernization" suggested that the changes afoot in Middletown were part of a larger process of social differentiation, a process in which a society improves its control over the environment via new technology and social organization (Caplow et al., 1982:408). And, consistent with other sociological observers at that time (e.g., Ogburn, 1922; Sorokin, 1927), they argued that modernization would gradually lessen the control of the family over the lives of its members.

In addition to their perception of temporal changes in parental orientations to children, a more central feature of the Lynds' analysis of child rearing was its attention to the role of social class. For them "social class" referred to differing labor force activities—the "working class" referring to those addressing their activities primarily to *things* and the "business class" referring to those whose activities were directed to *people*.[3] The Lynds considered class and its associated conditions of living to be "the most significant single cultural factor tending to influence what one does all day long throughout one's life" (p. 24), including conceptions of what is possible and desirable for children. Their findings with respect to the relationship of social class with parental values represented one of the first empirical demonstrations of the relationship. They identified a contrast between parental emphasis on autonomy or self-direction in children vs. the emphasis on obedience.[4] Working-class parents tended to emphasize conformity to adult and institutional authority, whereas parents of the business class registered greater preference for autonomy in children. Several lines of research following the Lynds' work utilized measures of this contrast and provided evidence of the relationship between socioeconomic variables and autonomy vs. conformity values (e.g., Duvall, 1946; Miller and Swanson, 1958; Kohn, 1959, 1963, 1969, 1976; Lenski, 1961; Alwin, 1984, 1988).[5]

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[3] This usage, consistent with more recent conceptions of class (see Wright, 1980), emphasizes the Marxian thesis that the nature of labor activity is a dominant organizing force within society (Habermas, 1973). The working-class category included those whose work utilized "material tools in the making of things and the performance of services," while the business-class category included persons who were involved in "the selling or promotion of things, services and ideas" (p. 22).

[4] It is interesting to note that Piaget (1932) in his examination of the principles of moral judgment in children developed a contrast between moral autonomy and moral heteronomy, the latter referring to evaluative judgments conforming to the dictates of external authority. Compatible with this set of conceptual distinctions, Miller and Swanson (1958) contrast parental orientations that are "entrepreneurial" (emphasizing child

Social Change in Middletown

Returning to Middletown in the post-Depression era, the Lynds witnessed several indications of continued changes in social life relevant to child rearing. Rather than the continued impact of growing size and the mechanization of its industrial processes, the major impetus for social change came from outside the geographical boundaries of Middletown. The institutional arrangements and the social structure of the community were viewed as the major sources of stability in the behavior of Middletown residents, whereas the external economic, social, and political events of the late 1920s and early 1930s were seen as the ultimate sources of change.

The implications of these changes for family life and parental orientations to children were, however, not a major focus of the Lynds' restudy of Middletown; and what few observations were made at that time regarding changes in the family emphasized continuity as much as change. However, they saw continued change in declining fertility and the increased acceptance of contraceptive aids (Lynd and Lynd, 1937:167),[6] a disintegration of traditional family roles, especially changes in the options available to women (p. 178), and the continued widening of the gap of mutual understanding between parents and their

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self-control and a manipulative stance toward the environment) with those that are "bureaucratic" (stressing reliance on external forms of behavioral control and an accommodation to the environment). Similarly, Kohn (1959, 1963, 1969, 1977) identifies the contrast between "self-direction" (thinking for oneself) and "conformity to external authority" (following the dictates of authority). And Lenski (1961) used the terms "intellectual autonomy" (thinking for oneself) and "intellectual heteronomy" (obedience to the dictates of others) to make this distinction.

[5] The importance of the Lynds' analysis of the role of class can in part be measured by the continued echoing of this theme in the literature on social stratification in later years. For example, in the 1940s and 1950s researchers debated whether the working class was more permissive than the middle class (see Davis and Havighurst, 1948; Havighurst and Davis, 1955) or vice versa (see Maccoby et al., 1954; Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, 1957). Later interpretations (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Kohn, 1959) focused on the goals of child rearing rather than the means. Kohn (1963, 1969, 1981) emphasizes the concept of parental values as embodying the standards of desirability parents use in evaluating the behavior of their children, regardless of their child-rearing practices, that is, regardless of the means they use to achieve their child-rearing goals (see Williams, 1968).

[6] Page references in this section, unless otherwise noted, are to Lynd and Lynd, 1937.

children. On this latter point, the Lynds were given the impression of "a more self-conscious subculture of the young in Middletown" in the mid-1930s (p. 167). The postponement of marriage (p. 168), increasing levels of premarital sexual activity among the young (p. 169), the emphasis on social activities tied to the high school (p. 171), and the desire for employment among young women (p. 179) were all indications of the general observation that "adult-imposed restraints of obedience to parents, school, and public opinion have weakened further as the adult world has crumbled under the depression" (p. 168).[7]

The Lynds' hypothesized continued changes in the relationships between children and their parents. They claimed that the working classes of the 1920s were performing at a level of technological complexity experienced decades earlier by the business class. Society was moving in the direction of greater complexity because of changing technology, e.g., the development of new tools and techniques of machine technology, changing social organization, and events occurring in the wider society, e.g., the influence of the mass media and the infusion of federal funds at the community level (Caplow et al., 1982:22–30).

The Lynds' hypotheses of continued change in the relationships between children and their parents are challenged by Caplow et al. (1982:33) in their restudy of Middletown in the late 1970s. They argue that "the scope and weight of parental authority in Middletown do not seem to have changed very much since 1925." To support this contention Caplow et al. utilize data from high school students, surveyed in 1977, which is comparable in major respects to the surveys of high school students conducted by the Lynds in the 1920s (see also Caplow and Bahr, 1979; Bahr, 1980). They found (1982:137–140), with a few notable exceptions, that male high school students in 1977 reported very similar patterns in aspects of independence from their parents as did their 1924 counterparts. For example, boys in 1977 were no more likely to spend their evenings away from home than boys in 1924. In terms of spending money, 1977 boys were somewhat more dependent upon their parents compared to their 1924 counterparts.

On the other hand, and somewhat contrary to the conclusions of Caplow et al., girls were substantially more independent of their parents in 1977. Girls were substantially more likely to spend their evenings away from home than those in 1924. In fact, in 1977 there were no sex differences in this aspect of child independence. In 1977 girls were less dependent than their 1924 counterparts on parents for spending money. And both sexes reported less dependence upon parents for information about sex in 1977 compared to 1924 (Bahr, 1980:42–43).

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[7] These observations are based on ethnographic data and are not buttressed by other sources of information, as were the observations made by the Lynds in the 1920s.

On the basis of these and other findings, Caplow et al. (1982:21–22, 136–158) conclude that descriptions of the nature of parent–child relationships found in the Lynds' original study of Middletown also characterized the reports of youth in the 1970s. They argue that, in many respects, "the changes that occurred between 1890 and 1925 were much more extensive and important than those that took place between 1925 and 1977" (p. 21). The transition from a "traditional to a modern family, from child labor to prolonged education, from hand-powered to the machine-powered home, and from the closed to an open community had been accomplished by 1925" (p. 21), and few important changes in the family occurred since. This slowing of the processes of modernization, they argue, means that the experiences of youth in today's Middletown resemble the experiences of the past generations.

The Research Problem

Over the past several decades the American family has experienced significant changes that are relevant to the degree of autonomy of its members. Indeed, there is widespread agreement among students of marriage and family life that major changes are occurring in traditional family arrangements (Masnick and Bane, 1980; Cherlin, 1981; Thornton and Freedman, 1983; Inkeles, 1984), many of which reflect changes in parent–child relationships. Although there are a number of indicators of changes in the family, several such indicators stand out. First, because of declining fertility rates since the eighteenth century and, from a more contemporary perspective, since the early 1960s, there is a trend toward smaller families (Westoff and Ryder, 1977). Second, because of greater economic independence of adult children from their parents and other relatives, and because of increasing divorce rates, there has been a decline in the number of adults living in the same household (Glick, 1984; Inkeles, 1984). Third, because of changing sex-role attitudes (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn, 1983), there has been an increase in the labor force activities of women with young children (see Davis, 1984).[8] Finally, because of delays in childbearing in recent decades, the typical parent in contemporary society is somewhat older than the typical parent in earlier decades. All of these changes have implications for adult orientations to children.

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[8] I should note that changes in attitudes do not necessarily imply changes in behavior, and trends in the household division of labor do not necessarily reflect these attitudinal changes (e.g., see Miller and Garrison, 1982). At the same time, some changing aspects of sex-role attitudes have emphasized declining support for the idea that women should be restricted to household roles, and this change, coupled with the observation of changes in female labor force participation, indicates a significant aspect of changing orientations to children, since, on average, working women spend less direct time with children.

Social change is in part mediated by parental influences (see Inkeles, 1955). Parents experiencing social change are likely to incorporate those values in raising their children which they identify with successful preparation for adult life. Consequently, in order to assess changes in parent–child relations one can profitably consider responses of parents, particularly indicators of parental values—what traits parents find desirable in their children. To the extent, then, that parental socialization practices are reflective of how parents think their children may be best prepared for participation in the future adult society, parental values are useful indicators of social change.

The Data

SAMPLES

Some of the figures presented in my analysis of changes in parental values were obtained from the published reports of the Lynds. Specifically, I rely on tabulations they provided (1929:523, table 14) based on a small sample of Middletown housewives (*N* = 141). This was a sample of married women living with one or more children between the ages 6 and 18 years. This sample, although not selected using methods of probability sampling, was described by the Lynds as "widely representative" of the social diversity of Middletown, particularly of the "working" and "business" classes (1929:509). They approached these data with warranted prudence, noting that the data are "offered not as an absolute proof" of the behavior of residents of Middletown, but as what were believed to be "significant indices to the behavior of this community" (1929:509). I approach these data with similar caution, since there is little available information regarding sample selection procedures and response rates.

I also analyze data from a 1978 sample of Middletown, which replicated the Lynds' survey of women with children at home. This data set, assembled by Caplow et al. (1982), contains responses obtained to survey interviews with 333 women. These were eligible respondents from a probability sample of households taken from a 1977 city directory. The response rate in this survey was 42%.[9]

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[9] The methods used by the Lynds are described on pp. 505–510 in the appendix to the 1929 volume. The available details of the 1978 study are reported by Caplow et al. (1982:403). No explanation for this low response rate is given in that report.

MEASURES

The measures of parental values used in the following analysis are based on questions about traits desired in children, which were virtually identical in the two surveys. The women in both surveys were asked to rate a list of 15 qualities of children according to their emphasis upon them in training their children. These women were also asked to rate the same list "as her own home training led her to believe her mother would have rated it thirty years ago when she was a child" (Lynd and Lynd, 1929:143). The qualities involved were in fact attributes of children, so the ratings reflect parental values. The Lynds report their methods as follows:

> The list consisted of fifteen habits observed to be stressed in greater or lesser degree in Middletown in the training of children: frankness; desire to make a name in the world; concentration; social-mindedness (defined as a "sense of personal responsibility for those less fortunate"); strict obedience; appreciation of art, music and poetry; economy in money matters; loyalty to the church; knowledge of sex hygiene; tolerance (defined as "respect for opinions opposed to one's own"); curiosity; patriotism; good manners; independence (defined as "ability to think and act for oneself"); getting very good grades in school. The lists were given to the women and they first marked the habits which they themselves regard as most important, rating the three most important "A," the five next most important "B," any of third-rate importance "C," and any which they regarded as unnecessary or undesirable zero. They then set down in another column what they thought, in the light of their own home training, their mothers' ratings would have been. (1929:143–144)

The replication of these procedures by Caplow et al. (1982) in the 1978 survey are as follows:

> I would now like to ask you about the qualities to be used in the home training of a boy and girl. (If the respondent doesn't have any children; state: About how you feel children should be raised.)
>
> 1. Which qualities do you feel are most important (Limit to 3); which ones are of second importance (Limit to 5); are of third importance, and any you would omit entirely? Let's do boys first. (Repeat for girls)
>
> 1. Frankness in dealing with others.
> 2. Desire to make a name in the world.
> 3. Concentration.
> 4. Social-mindedness (a sense of personal responsibility for those less fortunate).
> 5. Strict obedience.
> 6. Appreciation of art, music, and poetry.
> 7. Economy in money matters.
> 8. Loyalty to the church.
> 9. Knowledge of sex hygiene.
> 10. Tolerance (respect for opinions opposed to one's own).
> 11. Curiosity.

12. Patriotism.
13. Good manners.
14. Independence (ability to think and act for oneself).
15. Getting very good grades in school.

1a. How would your mother have rated these qualities when she was the same age as you are? (Repeat items for both boys and girls)

In 1978 these qualities were rated twice: once as they apply to the training of boys and once to the training of girls. This was a departure from the methods employed by the Lynds, but, consistent with the aims of the original research, the 1978 respondents were also asked to rate the qualities according to how their mothers would have rated them "when at the respondent's age." And again, in 1978 these ratings were obtained separately for boys and girls.

Changes in Traits Desired in Children

Table 1 presents the relative preferences of qualities on the above list by members of the 1924 and 1978 surveys. This table presents the proportion of the sample selecting a given trait as one of the three given most emphasis in training children. Separate information for rating boys and girls, as in the 1978 survey, was not obtained in the original study; thus, this information is combined here through simple averaging of response frequencies.[10] Table 1 gives this information for the total sample and for the business-class and working-class subsamples in both years.[11] The ratings by respondents of their mother's child-training approaches are also presented in this table; however, initially our primary concern is with the changes in self-reports between 1924 and 1978 (shown in boldface in Table 1).

These results indicate substantial change in parental values among members of both business and working classes over the more than fifty years studied. All but two of the traits listed in the table (*frankness* and *concentration*) show statistically significant differences in proportions ($p < .05$) between 1924 and 1978 in the total sample.[12] The changes are generally in the direction of emphasizing less obedience to the family and church and encouraging greater individual independence and responsibility. Indicative of these patterns is the dramatic shift in preferences for *strict obedience* over time, from 45% in 1924 to 17% in 1978. Similarly, preferences for *loyalty to the church* also declined radically, from 50% to 22%. It is remarkable that both of these qualities, *strict obedience* and *loyalty to the church,* were of highest importance in the Lynds' 1924 sample, whereas in 1978 they were of secondary importance. In addition, these data show there is an accompanying shift in the direction of greater emphasis on the autonomy/independence of the child. In 1978 the most important traits desired in children were *independence* and *tolerance,* both having been considerably less popular choices in 1924. The proportion selecting *independence* rose from 25% to 76%, while that choosing *tolerance* rose from 6% to 47%. If one accepts these samples as representative of parents in the two time periods, these are dramatic temporal patterns, reflecting substantial social change.

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[10] The ratings for boys and girls were in fact quite similar for all traits.

[11] As used by the Lynds, the working-class category included those whose work utilized "material tools in the making of things and the performances of services," while the business-class category included persons who were involved in "the selling or promotion of things, services and ideas" (1929:22). In the 1978 data the working-class category is composed of household heads' occupations falling into the 1970 Census three-digit occupational codes greater than 400, and the business-class category is composed of those households whose head's occupation falls into the 1970 Census three-digit codes of less than 400 (see Alwin, 1984:366).

[12] The statistical tests performed are tests of differences in proportions (see Blalock, 1972:228–232). Because the 1924 sample is not a probability sample and due to the

In accord with this general shift away from the valuation of obedience and in the direction of greater desires for traits linked to autonomy, there are a number of additional changes worthy of mention. *Patriotism* declined in importance from an endorsement of 21% in 1924 to less than 5% in 1978. The preference for *good manners* declined from 30% to 23%, while that of *economy in money* dropped in importance from 25% to 17%. In addition, preferences for *curiosity* and *social mindedness* also increased modestly during this period.

CLASS DIFFERENCES

For the most part, the important patterns observed in the total sample also appear within the two class categories employed here. There are class differences evident in the data presented in Table 1, consistent with other studies (see especially Kohn, 1959, 1969; Lenski, 1961; Alwin, 1984); and these class differences are generally found to persist over time, reflecting a broad-based social change not peculiar to one particular class grouping. The most striking patterns evidenced in a comparison of values across class categories shows the business class to be more likely to stress *independence* and less likely to value *good*

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relatively low response rate in the 1978 survey, these statistical tests are technically not appropriate. Still, I employ them here in order to get some sense of their likelihood of occurring by chance. Rather than clutter the table with indicators of statistical significance, I report levels of statistical significance in the text. In assessing class differences at the two times, one must bear in mind that the smaller sample size in 1924 makes it more difficult for a given difference to be viewed as statistically significant in 1924 than in 1978.

Table 1. Proportion of Sample Choosing Trait as One of the Three Most Desired Traits for Children to Have, by Survey Year and Social Class

	1924						1978					
			Class						Class			
	Total		Business		Working		Total		Business		Working	
Trait	Mother	Self	Mother	Self	Mother	Self	Mother	Self	Mother	Self	Mother	Self
Frankness	24.8	**27.0**	38.2	**43.2**	17.9	**21.2**	16.7	**25.5**	16.3	**22.3**	18.9	**32.6**
Desire to make name	5.0	**5.0**	2.9	**0.0**	6.0	**6.7**	6.6	**0.9**	7.1	**1.1**	6.7	**0.7**
Concentration	4.0	**9.2**	5.9	**18.9**	3.0	**5.8**	4.1	**7.7**	2.7	**6.5**	5.6	**9.3**
Social mindedness	6.9	**12.8**	8.8	**21.6**	6.0	**9.6**	17.3	**25.7**	21.7	**29.9**	13.0	**21.9**
Strict obedience	64.4	**45.4**	70.6	**43.2**	61.2	**46.2**	43.8	**16.8**	42.4	**13.6**	49.6	**20.7**
Appreciation of art, music, poetry	5.0	**9.2**	8.8	**13.5**	3.0	**7.7**	3.3	**4.8**	4.6	**6.5**	0.7	**3.0**
Economy in money	21.8	**24.8**	5.9	**8.1**	29.8	**30.8**	26.0	**16.8**	20.4	**12.0**	34.4	**23.0**
Loyalty to the church	69.3	**50.4**	67.6	**35.1**	70.1	**55.8**	35.0	**22.4**	38.0	**22.8**	32.2	**23.3**
Knowledge of sex hygiene	2.0	**14.9**	0.0	**16.2**	3.0	**14.4**	5.1	**7.8**	2.7	**4.9**	8.9	**12.6**
Tolerance	5.0	**5.7**	5.9	**10.8**	4.5	**3.8**	21.9	**46.8**	25.0	**50.8**	19.3	**45.6**
Curiosity	1.0	**0.7**	2.9	**0.0**	0.0	**1.0**	2.6	**9.9**	3.5	**15.8**	1.5	**3.0**
Patriotism	16.8	**20.6**	11.8	**21.6**	19.4	**20.2**	8.3	**4.5**	11.4	**5.7**	4.1	**3.0**
Good manners	40.6	**30.5**	38.2	**18.9**	41.8	**34.6**	40.4	**23.3**	35.9	**17.4**	50.0	**32.2**
Independence	15.8	**24.8**	17.6	**45.9**	14.9	**17.3**	34.4	**75.8**	37.2	**83.7**	32.6	**70.7**
Getting very good grades in school	14.9	**19.1**	11.8	**2.7**	16.4	**25.0**	23.6	**6.3**	22.6	**7.3**	26.7	**5.6**
N	101	141	34	37	67	104	313	324	175	184	133	135

manners and *strict obedience* than are members of the working class at both time periods. The greater preference of *tolerance* and *social mindedness* by the business class is evident in both time periods, although these differences are not statistically significant at both times. The preference for *loyalty to the church* was markedly greater in 1924 among the business class; however, in 1978 the two groups converged on a substantially lower value. It is also noteworthy that there is no class effect on preferences for *patriotism*, and in the post-Vietnam era both groups evince little concern for patriotism as a matter of emphasis in child rearing.

While the class differences are relatively consistent, there are some unexpected, though perhaps understandable, patterns reflected in these depictions. As the data in the table show, preferences for *frankness* have been relatively stable, but the class differences have reversed themselves, and the overall change is statistically significant ($p < .05$).[13] In 1924 the business class exceeded the working class by more than 20 percentage points in the expressed preference for this quality (frankness in dealing with others), whereas in 1978 the working class exceeded the business class by 12 points. This may reflect a somewhat changed meaning of the phrase, and although the intent was perhaps to assess qualities like honesty and forthrightness, its meaning may be more ambiguous in the more recent period.

A similar interaction with time, although not significant, is demonstrated by the relative preferences for the quality *economy in money*. While there was an apparent class effect in 1924, with the working class considerably more concerned with saving money, by 1978 the concerns of both groups begin to converge. The percentage differences in 1924 and 1978 were 23% and 11% respectively. This may reflect the general improvement in economic well-being of Middletown's working class since the early part of the twentieth century, and additionally, perhaps reflects the concerns of business people during the economic recession of the late 1970s.

RESPONDENTS' ESTIMATES OF THEIR MOTHERS' PREFERENCES

To this point in the examination of the data shown in Table 1 I have focused only on the comparisons of self-reports of women in 1924 and 1978. The assessment of changes in orientations to children can to some extent be broadened by taking into account the reports given by these women regarding their estimates of their mothers' child-training emphases. There is obviously considerable ambiguity in these ratings, since they are a mixture of both the errors of children's perceptions of their parents' behavior and the realities of family life in an earlier period.

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[13] This interaction of time with class was evaluated in terms of the differences in the class differences in proportions (see Blalock, 1972:230–231).

If one chooses to believe the respondent ratings of their mother primarily reflect subjective biases, there is some evidence for the view that parents are perceived to be substantially more conservative, regardless of the time period. In both survey years, for example, women rate their mothers as more *obedience-oriented*, in favor of less *independence*, and greater *loyalty to the church*. There are some exceptions to this pattern, but the major theme is one of the earlier generation being perceived as stressing greater obedience and less autonomy. On the other hand, these findings are also consistent with the idea that the parent ratings reflect valid point estimates at an earlier time. And, from this point of view, these data simply add further confirmation to, and extension of, the objective trends reported in the 1924 and 1978 Middleton surveys (see Table 1), namely the shift from obedience to autonomy. Unfortunately, we have no clear way of choosing between these interpretations, but either is consistent with the findings.[14]

Explanations of Change

The foregoing analyses indicate there is broad support for the conclusion that major changes have occurred since the beginning of this century in traits desired in children. These results suggest changing patterns of relationships in the family and changing parental conceptions of what traits are desirable in children in modern society. Preferences for autonomy in children have increased and preferences for obedience to adult authority have declined in Middletown. These results are consistent with temporal patterns observed in my analysis of data from Detroit area surveys (Alwin, 1984, 1986) and from national data (Wright and Wright, 1976), which suggest a historical movement in child-rearing orientations from a dominant emphasis on obedience in children to a contemporary emphasis on qualities associated with autonomy. The Detroit surveys, while rich in their possibilities, are limited to the time period from 1958 to the present; and the only available national study pertains to the decade between 1964 and 1973. The patterns they reflect, however, are consistent with the broader time period covered by the Middletown data. Both studies suggest that parental values have changed in significant ways over the present century.

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[14] Using data of this same type Inkeles ([1955] 1983:183) concluded that such differences between respondent self-reports and estimates of their parents reflected social change rather than the biased perceptions of the present generation. He states: "we have data that indicate this procedure of ascertaining the child-rearing values of an earlier generation by accepting the description given by those who had been the children of the group being studied, is methodologically less suspect than might appear to be the case."

There are (at least) three general, non–mutually exclusive, theoretically plausible sources of these changes: (1) the independently changing nature of values and orientations to the family, (2) the changing nature of aspects of technology and/or production placing demands on increasingly complex characteristics of members of society and increasingly of children, or (3) the changing characteristics of one or more subgroups within society, having to do with the dynamics of social composition and assimilation of ethnic groups. I briefly consider each of these in the following paragraphs.

One important potential interpretation of the changes observed in the foregoing refers to changes in more general aspects of the family, not simply in parent–child relationships. As indicated above, an increasing number of important changes in the nature of the American family have occurred over several decades. Many of these changes reflect a somewhat broad-based shift in the direction of granting greater autonomy to family members, particularly women and children. The changes in parental values documented here may reflect the exogenous influences of broader-based changes happening in family relationships, independent of other changes occurring in the wider society (e.g., Thompson, 1984; Inkeles, 1984; Zelizer, 1985).

On the other hand, the changing nature of the family may not be exogenous, but may be due to more basic changing features of technology and social organization. Thus, a second view of these changes, articulated by the Lynds, and to some extent by Caplow et al. (1982), is that they reflect the movement of society along a dimension of increased complexity, that is, the process of modernization. According to this view, changes in technological and organizational aspects of the economy generate changes in desirable individual characteristics that correspond to changing aspects of social roles (Inkeles and Smith, 1974; Bowles and Gintis, 1976). The growth of organizational roles requiring greater technical training and the greater demands for educational certification among professional occupations have contributed to major changes in educational expansion over the past century (Collins, 1979). And the expansion in levels of education in this century is especially important in this regard, given the well-known connection between levels of education and adult values favoring the development of autonomy (rather than conformity) in children (Kohn, 1969, 1981; Alwin, 1984).

Census data for Middletown assembled by Howard Bahr indicate dramatic changes in levels of education since 1940.[15] In 1940 the median number of years of schooling completed in the population 25 years or older was 8.7 years for men and 9.0 for women. In 1980 the comparable figures were 11.5 and 11.6 for men and women respectively. Somewhat greater increases occurred in the U.S. population, from a median of 8.6 in 1940 to 12.6 in 1980. Nonetheless, these changes in education in Middletown are substantial.

The changes in parental values witnessed above are particularly interesting in this regard, since as Inkeles (1955) keenly observed, parental orientations to children are an important indicator of social change. Parents experiencing social change are likely to want to raise their children differently from what they perceive were their own parents' approaches to child rearing, adapting their child-rearing values (and practices) to meet the demands of social life as they currently experience it. Through their orientations to children, the parental generation not only passes along stable norms and values of the culture, it also mediates social change through emphases in child rearing aimed at preparing children for the society of the present and future. In this regard, then, the increased complexity of occupational roles (not necessarily bureaucratization) between the 1920s and the 1980s (see Kohn, 1969:193–194) and the increased desirability of educational attainment for children in U.S. society may be in part responsible for the dramatic changes in parental values in Middletown summarized above.[16] The qualities emphasized in the parental values of 1978 are well-suited to progress through the modern educational system (see Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

A third possible explanation for these changes refers to the changing characteristics of one or more subgroups in Middletown. My research in the Detroit area (Alwin, 1984), for example, has identified significant changes in parental values in Detroit from 1958 to 1983, largely due to the changing values of Catholics. These patterns are consistent with a more general shift in the orientations of Catholic ethnic groups of European descent in American society (see Alba, 1976, 1981). And while these patterns may not be generalizable to Muncie, Indiana, since there are relatively few Catholics residing there, they do suggest the possibility that social trends, such as those observed above, may be due in part to disproportionate change among subgroups.[17] One potential such differentiating factor, examined in the above analysis, is social class; however, little evidence exists to suggest that one such social category accounts for most of the major changes reported here. Indeed, one of the important findings in the present research is the great uniformity in social change across social class categories.

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[15] Some of these data are presented in Bahr, 1980:49. Figures for 1980 were obtained from the Middletown Studies Center.

[16] The case record data for the 1924 study are not available. Thus, it is not possible to directly examine such changes in Middletown through a systematic analysis of change in the two data sets.

Discussion and Conclusions

These results are of particular interest, given the general conclusions offered by the Middletown III project suggesting the lack of substantial change in critical aspects of family relationships in Middletown between 1924 and the late 1970s (see Bahr, 1980; Bahr, Caplow, and Leigh, 1980; Caplow and Chadwick, 1979; Caplow et al., 1982; and Hill, 1982). Is it possible to reconcile these two sets of findings?

One possibility is that, while changes have occurred in subjective aspects of parental values, fundamental changes have not occurred in many behavioral aspects of parent–child relationships. Such an explanation draws attention to the issue of whether subjective indicators are less valid indicators of change than are behavioral measures. This is clearly an issue, since attitudes and values may change in advance of more basic roles and norms; still, as I suggested earlier in the paper, there is actually some evidence in the behavioral reports of Middletown youth of the changes in values I present above (see Bahr, 1980; Caplow et al., 1982:136–158).

As Bahr (1980) indicates, there is some evidence that adolescent children are more independent of their parents in contemporary Middletown than was the case for their 1924 counterparts. Although adolescent boys were reported to be substantially similar at the two time points, adolescent girls in 1977 were significantly more likely to spend evenings away from home and significantly less likely to depend upon parents for spending money, and adolescents of both sexes were less likely to depend upon their parents for information about sex. On every indicator presented by Bahr and his colleagues, female youth were significantly more independent in 1977 than in 1924. Moreover, young persons of both sexes in 1977 were significantly less likely to report that the number of evenings spent away from home on school nights was a source of disagreement between them and their parents (Bahr, 1980:44). Fewer disagreements were reported over the use of the automobile and over church attendance in 1977 than in 1924, and more conflicts were reported having to do with friendship choices and responsibilities for household tasks. Thus, although there may be several similarities in aspects of parent–child relationships over this time period, the areas in which differences emerge are particularly revealing.

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[17] In both periods Roman Catholics comprised about 10% of the population of Middletown (Caplow et al., 1983), and even though one might expect Catholics there to have changed in line with the Detroit findings, they represent too small a part of the population to have had much impact.

Bahr and his colleagues (Bahr, 1980:46–48; Caplow et al., 1982:149–150) also provide some interesting subjective data on young persons' views on the "most desirable" qualities of mothers and fathers in 1924 and 1977, which are indicative of change in the direction of greater autonomy in the relationships of family members. Compared to those adolescents surveyed in 1924 by the Lynds, adolescents in 1977 wanted significantly greater respect for their opinions from their parents, wanted mothers to "nag" them less about what they did, and believed that "being a good cook and housekeeper" was a substantially less desirable quality for a mother to have.

Thus, the differences in conclusions reached in my analysis of parental values and those reached by Bahr and colleagues about the extent of change in parent–child relationships do not seem to depend upon the subjective nature of parental values measures. Rather, the conclusions appear to depend as much upon emphasis and interpretation of the data rather than the documented trends themselves. Bahr (1980:51), for example, suggests that where change has occurred it has been in the direction of the lessening of constraint of parents over their children. By contrast, Caplow et al. (1982:31–33) suggest that because of the slowing of social change in Middletown, the experiences of children and adolescents are not all that different from those experiences of the preceding generations, "not conspicuously freer or more constrained than their predecessors."

However one views the nature of historical change and stability in family forms and processes in Western society over the past centuries, about which there is a range of opinion (e.g., Aries, 1962; Greven, 1970; DeMause, 1974; Stone, 1977; Schlumbohm, 1980; Smith, 1983), there is little question that, even within the past half-century in the United States, the institutional experiences of parents and the contexts of child rearing are changing. And, whatever interpretation one gives to the changes in parental values in Middletown witnessed in the foregoing presentation, there seems to be substantial evidence in favor of the observation that parents desire greater independence and less obedience in their children, and that these values are to some extent embodied in their children's behavior.

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THE EFFECTS OF RACE OF THE INTERVIEWER ON MEASURES OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION BY BLACKS IN SRC NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES

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Abstract This study investigates the effect of the race of the interviewer on self-reported voting, actual voting, and political attitudes of black respondents, based on the SRC/CPS National Election Studies (NES) of 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, and 1984. The impact of race of the interviewer in the NES surveys has not been analyzed previously. Over the course of the five studies, the proportion of black respondents who were interviewed by black interviewers declined sharply, particularly in the South. Almost all white respondents were interviewed by whites.

Except for southern blacks in the pre–Voting Rights Act election of 1964, black nonvoters in the presidential election surveys

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of 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 who lived in predominantly black neighborhoods and who were interviewed by black interviewers were more likely to report falsely that they voted than black respondents interviewed by white interviewers. Black respondents in black neighborhoods who were interviewed by black interviewers were also more likely *actually* to vote and to endorse civic norms than blacks interviewed by whites. Hence, matching the respondent and the interviewer by race not only generates *response effects*—error in the answers—but also, for many black respondents, it appears to *induce changes in actual behavior.*

The American National Election Studies conducted by the Survey Research Center and Center for Political Studies of the University of Michigan are the most important single source of survey data for monitoring change in the American electorate. Therefore, it is important to establish whether the National Election Study (NES) data register real change rather than change in the measuring instrument. This research focuses on the effects of the race of the interviewer on responses by blacks in NES surveys. No previous studies of interviewer effects on NES results have been published.

Previous research demonstrates that whether the respondent and the interviewer are of the same race affects responses on items related to race, such as expressed hostility or closeness toward members of different racial groups (Schuman and Converse, 1971; Schuman and Hatchett, 1974). Race-of-interviewer effects have not been studied for NES surveys partly because interviewer characteristics are not included in the data files distributed by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Researchers have also paid little attention to other sources of response error in the NES surveys that could be confounded with interviewer effects, such as the effect of the interview–reinterview format of the presidential-year studies and of the major panel studies in 1956–1958–1960 and 1972–1974–1976.[1] Interest in the unintended effects of the survey method has been intensified by the extremely high level of self-reported voting among NES respondents. This may be partly an artifact of respondent selectivity and partly a vote-stimulation effect of the preelection interviews conducted in presidential election years.[2]

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[1] Effects of the form or context of the interview that have been examined include the presence of third parties in the interview (Silver, Abramson, and Anderson, 1986), and the use of telephone rather than in-person interviews (Shanks, Sanchez, and Morton, 1983).

[2] On the possibility of vote-stimulation by the preelection interviews, see Clausen, 1968, and Traugott and Katosh, 1979. For a study of this phenomenon not based on NES data, see Yalch, 1976.

Analyses of the NES vote validation data have revealed that between 20% and 30% of respondents who did not actually vote report to the interviewer that they voted. This response bias appears to be a consequence of the respondents' tendency to exaggerate their conformity with socially approved norms, especially if they personally endorse those norms (Silver, Abramson, and Anderson, 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986).[3] Race is the *respondent* characteristic that has been reported most often as linked to vote overreporting, that is, to less valid self-reported behavior. Blacks are more likely to overreport voting than whites (for a summary of the evidence, see Abramson and Claggett, 1984, 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986; Anderson and Silver, 1986). Hence, it is appropriate to examine whether this race difference in responses is related to the race of the interviewer.

To increase our understanding of the effects of the race of the interviewer in NES surveys, with the cooperation and assistance of the Survey Research Center, we obtained data on the characteristics of interviewers for the five NES surveys for which vote validation studies have been conducted.[4] The vote validation studies provide an external validity check on the accuracy of survey responses. In these years, SRC interviewers or field supervisors checked the local registration and voting records of the survey respondents to determine whether they actually voted.

In addition to examining the relation between the race of the interviewer and the validity of the self-reported vote, we investigate whether the race of the interviewer is related to actual voting behavior and to civic attitudes of black respondents. In light of the evidence by other researchers that preelection interviews stimulate voting, it is important to know whether black interviewers are more likely to stimulate black respondents not only to *say* that they voted but also *actually* to vote. Also, because previous research has shown a positive relation between overreporting of voting and adherence to civic norms such as political efficacy and sense of citizen duty (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986), the strength of this relation could be affected by exogenous factors that stimulate both reported adherence to civic norms and actual and reported voting.

[3] Overreporting is not simply an effect of the stimulus of the preelection interview, because it occurs also in surveys in which no preelection survey was conducted. See Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986.

[4] Acquiring information about interviewer characteristics for studies prior to 1978 required original coding of information from personnel files as well as consultation in many instances with the interview booklets. For the 1964 NES, we were not able to obtain interviewer data for those postelection interviewers for whom no identification number was given in the data files. These are all cases in which the postelection interviewer was a different person from the preelection interviewer—about 5% of the cases.

Race of Respondent and Race of Interviewer in the National Election Studies

The conventional wisdom for assigning interviewers by race has been expressed by Backstrom and Hursh-César (1981:243):

> [Race and ethnicity] are important matching characteristics in general population studies. Interviewers who are drawn from the racial/ethnic background to be studied are generally the most successful: blacks are more successful interviewing blacks; whites are more successful interviewing whites (and similarly, Puerto Ricans with Puerto Ricans, American Indians with American Indians, Chinese with Chinese). Where single ethnic groups are clustered in specific neighborhoods or areas, if possible interviewers are used who have matching ethnic characteristics.

This prescription implies that matching interviewer and respondent by race is not only desirable but also the standard procedure for general-purpose surveys, despite the evidence that for most survey questions, this matching probably makes little difference (e.g., Schuman and Converse, 1971; Schuman and Hatchett, 1974). Nor does it reflect the reality of how interviewers are assigned in many major surveys, including NORC's General Social Survey (GSS) (Schaeffer, 1980) and the SRC/CPS National Election Studies.[5]

Figure 1 shows the relation between the race of the interviewer and the race of the respondent in the five NES postelection surveys in which the respondents' vote was validated.[6] In all of the surveys, almost all white respondents were interviewed by whites. Blacks were much more likely to be interviewed by blacks than whites were, but in all five surveys a majority of black respondents were interviewed by whites. In 1964, 43% of blacks were interviewed by blacks, the highest level for any postelection NES survey.[7] By 1984 this percentage dropped to 13%.

[5] We discussed this matter with several NORC field managers for the GSS in the New York metropolitan area. They try to assign black interviewers to black respondents, but if they do not succeed (because of a shortage of black interviewers), they then try to assign experienced white interviewers to black respondents. We also discussed this with Maria Sanchez, who is director of the Field Section of the Survey Research Center. She reports that for the NES surveys, the primary concern in the assignment of interviewers is to complete the interviews. For this reason, black interviewers are usually assigned to areas in which black respondents are concentrated. But there is no policy of matching the race of interviewers and respondents. According to Sanchez, the reduction over time in the proportion of interviews of blacks that are conducted by black interviewers (shown in Figures 1 and 2) reflects the increasing difficulty of recruiting black women for the kind of part-time and intermittent work that interviewing normally entails.

[6] A vote validation study was conducted also for the 1986 NES, but the data are not yet available for analysis.

[7] In the 1964 *pre*election NES survey, 47% of black respondents were interviewed by blacks. For the years 1972–1977, for which we have information about the race of interviewers and respondents from the NORC GSS (Schaeffer, 1980), black respondents

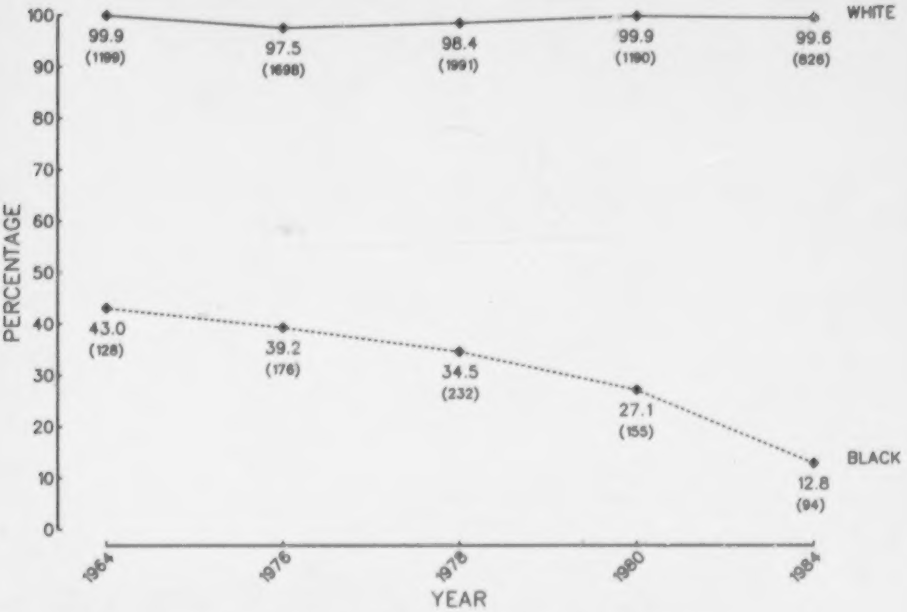

Figure 1. Percentage of Black and of White Respondents Interviewed by Members of Same Race in Postelection NES.
Note: The number of respondents of the given race at the given date is shown in parentheses.

Thus, the assignment of interviewers by race in NES surveys does not follow the procedure recommended by Backstrom and Hursh-César. More important, if the race of the interviewer does influence response patterns, there is considerable potential for confounding trends in survey responses by blacks with trends in the racial composition of the interviewer staff.

Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (1985:153) point out that the percentage of black respondents who come from the South has not changed much in NES surveys, and hence trends in black racial attitudes cannot be explained by shifts in the regional composition of the sample. However, to test for the effects of the race of the interviewer, we must take into account the possibility that the race of the interviewer is systematically related to respondent characteristics, including the distribution of respondents by region. For example, as shown in Figure 2, the

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in the GSS were substantially more often interviewed by blacks than black respondents in the SRC National Election Studies of either 1964 or 1976. Thus, for items that are sensitive to the race of the interviewer, direct comparison of results from the GSS and the NES must be made with caution.

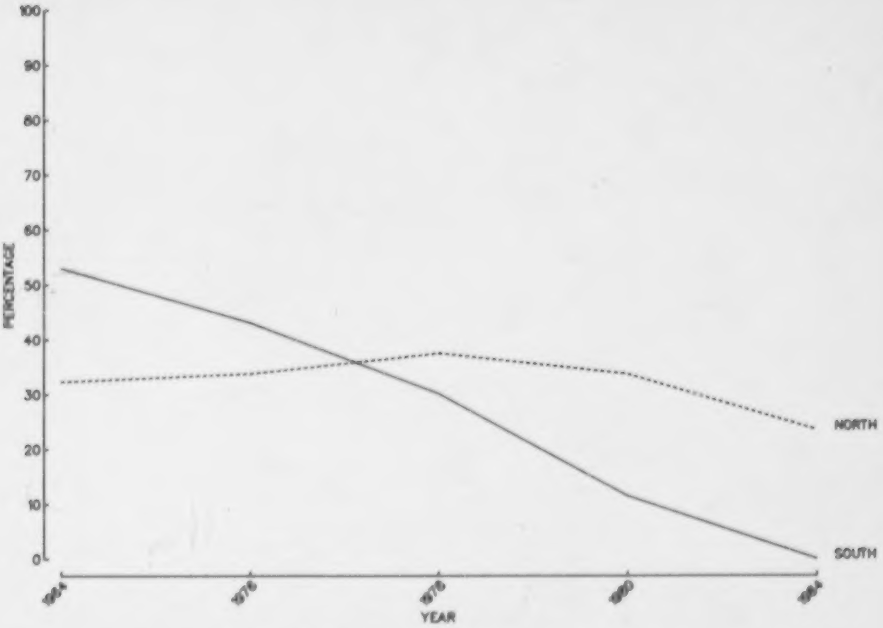

Figure 2. Percentage of Black Respondents Interviewed by Blacks in Postelection NES, by Region

proportion of southern blacks who were interviewed by blacks has declined markedly, from 54% in 1964 to less than 10% in 1984.[8] In contrast, among blacks in the North, the proportion interviewed by blacks has declined only moderately. Consequently, if there is a relation between respondents' attitudes and their region of residence, it could be confounded by a change in the racial composition of the interviewer staff.

Similarly, it is important to control for possible effects of the neighborhood in which respondents reside, particularly because, as we shall show, the assignment of interviewers by race is related to neighborhood racial composition. The NES surveys provide considerable information about the respondents' socioeconomic status, but little information about the characteristics of their neighborhoods. Earlier surveys provided more of this kind of information than more recent ones. For 1964 and 1976, we have information about the racial (black–white) composition of the neighborhood based on the respondent's

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[8] We use the terms "non-South" and "North" interchangeably. We label as "South" the states classified as "Solid South" in ICPSR codebooks: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. These include all states of the old Confederacy except Tennessee. In the SRC samples, the Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) in Tennessee are selected to represent the Border States rather than the Solid South.

Table 1. Reported Racial Composition of Neighborhood, by Region and by Race of Interviewer, in 1964 and 1976 NES Preelection Surveys

	North		South		Total	
Racial Composition of Neighborhood	White Int.	Black Int.	White Int.	Black Int.	White Int.	Black Int.
1964						
All white	79.0%	3.8%	84.2%	1.3%	80.0%	2.5%
Mostly white	17.4	10.1	10.5	3.8	16.1	7.0
Half and half	2.6	25.3	4.9	11.5	3.0	18.5
Mostly black	1.0	46.8	0.4	29.5	0.9	38.2
All black	0.0	13.9	0.0	53.8	0.0	33.8
Total percent	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%
Base *N*	1124	79	266	78	1390	157
1976						
All white	63.4%	0.0%	57.5%	0.0%	62.2%	0.0%
Mostly white	31.6	15.1	33.8	7.0	32.1	10.9
Half and half	4.1	22.6	6.9	12.2	4.7	17.2
Mostly black	0.9	50.9	1.5	33.9	1.0	42.1
All black	0.0	11.3	0.2	47.0	0.1	29.9
Total percent	100.0%	99.9%	99.9%	100.1%	100.0%	100.0%
Base *N*	1550	106	405	115	1955	221

NOTES: The question about the racial composition of the neighborhood was worded as follows in 1976: "Is this neighborhood you now live in all white, mostly white, about half white and half black, mostly black, or all black?" The data for 1964 in this and later tables exclude cases in the "Negro Supplement." Cases for which data are missing, or in which respondent and interviewer are not white or black, are excluded. For 1964, for 88 cases no postelection interviewer information was available.

self-report. For these surveys, we can discern the pattern of interviewer assignment by racial composition of the neighborhood. But analogous information was not collected in later NES surveys, and information identifying the census tract within which the respondents reside is masked in the available data to protect the respondents' confidentiality.

Table 1 reports the racial distribution of the interviewers by the reported racial composition of the neighborhood and by region for the 1964 and 1976 preelection surveys. Although there may be some error in the reported racial composition of the neighborhoods, Table 1 shows a clear pattern of assigning interviewers to neighborhoods on the basis of race.[9] The assignment of interviewers in NES surveys appears to fit the pattern described by Schaeffer (1980) for the NORC General Social Survey in the 1970s. Black interviewers are assigned almost exclusively to areas where black respondents are expected to be found. Any whites interviewed by blacks are likely to be residents of predominantly black or racially mixed neighborhoods. Essentially only white interviewers are assigned to exclusively white neighborhoods, but many white interviewers are assigned to black neighborhoods (this must be so for recent NES surveys).

Because we do not have information about the racial composition of the neighborhoods for all five of the NES surveys that we analyze, we use a proxy variable for this purpose. For all surveys, we can classify respondents according to whether they lived in a central city of a metropolitan area, another part of a metropolitan area, or a nonmetropolitan area (which includes small cities and towns as well as rural areas).[10] Based on evidence from 1964 and 1976, for blacks outside the South, whether or not respondents resided in a central city rather than in another part of a metropolitan area or in a nonmetropolitan area is strongly related to whether they lived in mostly black or all-black neighborhoods (data not shown). Hence, for all five surveys, for *northern* black respondents, we will use residence in a central city as a proxy for residence in a predominantly black neighborhood. For *southern* blacks, a large majority of all respondents, regardless of the type of place in which they resided, lived in neighborhoods that were mostly black or all black.

In an experimental design to test for race-of-interviewer effects, one would assign black and white interviewers randomly to black respondents (or to areas where there is a high probability that the respondents will be black). This strategy was pursued by Schuman and Converse, for example, in the 1968 Detroit Area Study. In the nonexperimental design afforded by the NES surveys, because of collinearity between the interview context and the race of the interviewer, any relation between the race of the interviewer and response patterns could be confounded with neighborhood effects. Nonetheless, in recent NES surveys, a substantial number of blacks who lived in central cities of metropolitan areas were interviewed by whites.[11]

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[9] Schuman and Converse (1971) report in their study based in Detroit in 1968 that whether black respondents answered "yes" to the question "Were there any white students in the schools you attended?" was sensitive to whether the interviewer was white or black. Hence, how respondents described the racial composition of their neighborhoods in the NES surveys could also be affected by the race of the interviewer.

[10] This classification is based on the "belt code" variable reported for each study.

[11] See footnote 14 for a discussion of additional implications of the sample design for the interpretation of our results.

Validity of the Self-Reported Vote

To examine whether the race of the interviewer affects the *accuracy* of answers, we compare the respondent's self-report in the postelection survey to the respondent's validated vote based on a check of local registration and voting records.[12] The validation procedure itself is not error-free and has improved in later administrations (Traugott and Katosh, 1979; Katosh and Traugott, 1981). Despite this, there is a great deal of consistency over time in the patterns of misreporting (Abramson and Claggett, 1984, 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986).

In this part of the analysis, we use as our measure of misreporting the percentage of validated nonvoters who claimed (falsely) that they voted. *Nonvoters* are the respondents who are at risk of misreporting, because they are subject to the social stigma of failing to conform to the civic norm of voting. Validated *voters*, on the other hand, almost never report in surveys that they did not vote.[13]

Panel A of Table 2 shows that in all five of the vote validation studies, black nonvoters were more likely to overreport voting than white nonvoters. Except in the 1978 midterm NES study, at least 30% of black nonvoters reported that they voted. It is also helpful to examine differences by region. Since a much larger proportion of black respondents than white respondents resides in the South, some of the racial difference could be a result of a regional difference. Southerners in general have had lower voting turnout than northerners (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, 1986), so that the stigma attached to nonvoting may not be as great in the South.

The results in panel B of Table 2 are consistent with our expectation. Although regional differences in overreporting by whites are small, except in 1984 southern white nonvoters were consistently less likely to overreport voting than northern whites. Among black nonvoters, southerners were also consistently less likely to overreport voting than northerners, and the differences are much greater than among whites.

Table 3 shows the extent of overreporting broken down by race of respondent and race of interviewer. We shall focus on the race-of-interviewer effects on black respondents. As shown in panel A, in the last three presidential-year elections, blacks interviewed by blacks were more likely to overreport voting. That is, for blacks, responses were *less valid* when the race of the interviewer and the race of the respondent were matched than when they were not. In 1964 and 1978,

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[12] See the Appendix for information on the coding of the vote validation variables and on the wording of the postelection question about whether the respondent voted.

[13] For further discussion of the issues involved, see Anderson and Silver, 1986; and Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986.

Table 2. Percent of Validated Nonvoters Who Report That They Voted, by Race of Respondent and by Region, 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1984

Race of Resp.	Region of Resp.	1964		1976[a]		1978		1980		1984[a]	
		Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*
A											
White		27.1	280	30.6	582	22.0	1058	27.2	416	24.0	262
Black		30.8	52	39.1	87	26.4	163	30.9	68	30.5	59
B											
White	North	28.8	212	31.1	427	22.6	767	27.9	297	23.4	192
White	South	22.1	68	29.0	155	20.6	291	25.2	119	25.7	70
Black	North	50.0	18	42.4	33	29.3	82	33.3	42	42.9	28
Black	South	20.6	34	37.0	54	23.5	81	26.9	26	19.4	31

NOTE: For the procedures used to construct the vote validation variables, see the Appendix.

[a] Cases in which the postelection interview was conducted by telephone are excluded. For *all* 1984 nonvoters, the percentage of nonvoters who reported that they voted was 24.5 for whites and 31.5 for blacks. For persons interviewed by telephone in the postelection survey, the corresponding percentages were 24.9 for whites and 32.7 for blacks.

Table 3. Percent of Validated Nonvoters Who Report That They Voted, by Race of Respondent, Race of Interviewer, and Region, 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1984

Race of:		1964		1976		1978		1980		1984	
Resp.	Interv.	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*
A											
White	White	26.5	253	30.1	564	21.7	1026	26.7	405	23.7	253
White	Black	—	0	50.0	14	43.8	16	—	1	—	0
Black	White[a]	33.3	21	32.2	59	27.1	107	23.4	47	31.1	45
Black	Black[a]	18.2	22	53.6	28	25.5	55	50.0	16	42.9	7
B											
North											
Black	White	45.5	11	41.7	24	28.0	50	32.0	25	50.0	18
Black	Black	66.7	3	44.4	9	32.3	31	38.5	13	42.9	7
South											
Black	White	20.0	10	25.7	35	26.3	57	13.6	22	18.5	27
Black	Black	10.5	19	57.9	19	16.7	24	100.0	3	—	0

NOTE: Data are restricted to cases in which interviewers were either white or black.

[a] The total number of black and white *interviewers* who interviewed blacks in the postelection surveys were: 1964—14 black, 20 white; 1976—14 black, 43 white; 1978—18 black, 53 white; 1980—7 black, 44 white; 1984—4 black, 29 white (in-person interviews only).

however, blacks who were interviewed by whites were more likely to overreport voting than blacks interviewed by blacks; in those years, responses given to black interviewers were *more valid* than responses given to white interviewers. We think there are substantive reasons for the different response patterns for the different elections, and we will discuss them below.

Panel B of Table 3 shows the extent of overreporting of voting by black nonvoters, classified simultaneously by region and by the race of the interviewer. In every survey except 1984, northern blacks overreported voting more often when interviewed by black interviewers than when interviewed by white interviewers. In contrast, for southern blacks the relation between the race of the interviewer and the extent of overreporting of voting differs greatly from one election to the next. In 1964, black interviewers were more likely to elicit accurate reports of voting from southern black respondents than were white interviewers. This result is probably due to the fact that this election preceded the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Before the Voting Rights Act, it would have made little sense for disenfranchised black respondents in the South to claim that they voted. It would have been especially odd for disenfranchised blacks to report falsely that they had voted when the interviewer was a black who, the respondent could assume, understood political reality.

There are reasons why blacks in the 1978 survey would not have felt a strong motivation to overreport voting. Midterm elections usually offer lower incentives for both blacks and whites to vote, particularly in the South, and overall turnout in the 1978 election was extremely low (Burnham, 1982). Nonetheless, in the 1978 NES there appears to be a slightly greater tendency for northern black respondents to overreport voting when interviewed by a black than when interviewed by a white; but the relation is reversed among southern black respondents.

Multivariate Test for Race-of-Interviewer Effects on Vote Overreporting

RATIONALE

Overreporting of voting does not occur only among blacks. Nor is it an inevitable consequence of the survey method. Previous research has shown that overreporting occurs primarily among respondents who are politically mobilized or who have a normative commitment to voting. Respondents who declare that they expect to vote, have a strong sense of civic duty, are interested in the campaign, are concerned about the election outcome, have strong partisan loyalties, and are more highly educated are not only likely *actually* to vote. If for some reason they do not vote, they are likely to report falsely after the election that they did vote (see Silver, Abramson, and Anderson, 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986). In contrast, respondents who declare in a preelection survey that they do not expect to vote in the coming election rarely vote and rarely report after the election that they voted, regardless of the strength of other motivational factors such as partisanship and interest in the campaign.

Because of the small number of black nonvoters in any given NES survey, we shall pool the cases from the presidential election surveys of 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984.[14] We exclude the 1978 NES because the respondents' *pre*election expectation to vote is a critical variable in the analysis, and the 1978 NES conducted only a postelection survey. We also exclude from the analysis of vote misreporting those cases in the 1984 postelection survey in which the interview was conducted by telephone rather than in person.

In this multivariate analysis, we examine the independent effect of the race of the interviewer. We also examine the effect of the interaction between being interviewed by another black and not living in a predominantly black neighborhood, i.e., living in the North outside of a central city. We also examine the effect of being interviewed by another black on southern blacks who were respondents in the 1964 NES survey, before the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

MODEL SPECIFICATION

We use logit regression because the dependent variable is a binary variable (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984). To construct the dependent variable, validated nonvoters are dichotomized into those who said they voted (coded 1) and those who said they did not vote (coded 0). The logit regression therefore estimates the probability that nonvoters reported falsely in the postelection survey that they voted.

As a first step, we replicated the models estimated by Silver, Anderson, and Abramson (1986), but for black respondents only. We specified a base model in which the dependent variable, False Reporting (FR), is a logit function of whether or not the respondent declared that he or she expected to vote and of this variable jointly with education and two motivational variables, political efficacy and interest in the campaign.[15]

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[14] One potential problem in drawing inferences from the data used in this study is that the small number of black respondents in any NES survey could have come from only a few primary sampling units. Hence, the responses could reflect the peculiar experiences of respondents (or the operations of the survey organization) in a few locations, and differences in the responses from one survey to the next could reflect differences in the PSUs used in the samples. There is also a risk that a small number of *interviewers* could be responsible for most of the apparent interviewer effects. If so, what appear to be race-of-interviewer effects could actually be the effects of a few individual interviewer performances. The risk that either of these factors could account for our results is reduced by the pooling of cases in the remaining part of the analysis. Moreover, examination of the data reveals that the results are not due to the effects of a few PSUs or a few interviewers.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{logit(FR)} = {} & b_0 + b_1\text{1964-NES} + b_2\text{1976-NES} + b_3\text{1980-NES} \\ & + b_4\text{EXPECT} \\ & + b_5(\text{EXPECT} * \text{COLLEGE}) \\ & + b_6(\text{EXPECT} * \text{HIEFFICACY}) \\ & + b_7(\text{EXPECT} * \text{HIINTEREST})\end{aligned}$$

where FR = 1 if validated nonvoter said he or she voted, 0 if not
1964-NES = 1 if respondent (R) was in the 1964 NES, 0 if not
1976-NES = 1 if R was in the 1976 NES, 0 if not
1980-NES = 1 if R was in the 1980 NES, 0 if not
EXPECT = 1 if R expected to vote, 0 if not
COLLEGE = 1 if R completed some college or more, 0 if not
HIEFFICACY = 1 if R has high external political efficacy, 0 if not
HIINTEREST = 1 if R was very interested in the campaign, 0 if not

The wording of the questions, as well as the procedures for recoding the responses into the variables used in the calculations, is provided in the Appendix.

The effects of education and other variables are expressed as joint effects with expectation of voting (EXPECT), because previous research has shown that such an expectation is a necessary condition for overreporting (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986). Dummy variables are included for each NES to take into account unmeasured effects of differences between elections that could cause different overall levels of vote overreporting.[16] These effects could include differences in the quality or completeness of the vote validation, or differences in the overall stimulus to overreport voting, including the intensity of mobilization of the black vote.

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[15] This set of independent variables is distilled from an initial set that included additional measures of the motivation to vote (e.g., strength of partisanship, sense of citizen duty, concern about the election outcome). The additional variables were correlated with the measures of political efficacy and interest in the campaign. Partly for this reason, their inclusion in the equations did not improve the goodness of fit of the overall model. Both to reduce redundancy among the correlated independent variables and because logit regression estimates can be based only on cases for which there are no missing data on any of the variables in the equation, we exclude these variables from the equations.

[16] The omitted category is 1984-NES.

RESULTS

The results of the logit regression are shown in Table 4. The *t*-ratio for each coefficient is given in parentheses. Two models are specified. The base model as a whole (column 1) is statistically significant at $p < .001$.[17] Also, the main effect of the EXPECT variable is significant, as are the joint effects of EXPECT and *College Education,* EXPECT and *High Political Efficacy,* and EXPECT and *High Interest* in the campaign. Thus, the basic model accounting for vote overreporting in previous research holds up well when it is tested separately for black respondents. Black nonvoters who are more educated and who have a stronger commitment to the norm of voting are more likely to report that they voted.

The second model (column 2) adds to the initial equation three terms reflecting the joint effects of race of the interviewer, whether the respondent expected to vote, and place of residence. The first added term takes the value of 1 if the respondent was interviewed by a black interviewer and expected to vote, and 0 if not. The coefficient for this term thus reflects the "main effect" of the race of the interviewer. The second added term takes a value of 1 if the respondent was interviewed by a black interviewer *and* expected to vote *and lived in the North but outside a central city,* and the value of 0 if any of these conditions was not true. This term is designed to register the effect of residence outside of a predominantly black neighborhood. The third added term takes the value of 1 if the respondent was in the 1964 NES *and* lived in the South *and* was interviewed by a black interviewer *and* expected to vote, and a value of 0 if any of these conditions was not true. This term is designed to reflect the fact that southern blacks in the pre–Voting Rights Act era were much less likely to vote and less likely to feel an incentive to report to a black interviewer that they voted than were blacks in later presidential election surveys.

[17] Strictly speaking, the application of standard tests of significance is not appropriate for the type of multistage cluster sample used in NES surveys. Inference from the sample to the population is especially problematic when attention is focused on subclasses or domains of the sample, such as divisions by race and education (Kish, 1980). We employ standard tests of significance (applied to *t*-ratios of regression coefficients or to differences of proportions) for two reasons. First, they provide a minimum criterion for measuring the "signal-to-noise ratio" of a regression coefficient or a difference of proportions. Second, our main concern is not to generalize from the sample to the population of black Americans but instead to determine whether there are systematic (nonrandom) relations between the interviewer's race and the respondent's characteristics (background, behavior, attitudes) *in the NES surveys.* That is, could the relations found within the sample be due to chance alone? This is of special concern because of the small number of cases.

Table 4. Logit Estimates of Probability That Nonvoting Blacks Reported That They Voted, by Education, Commitment to Civic Norms, Race of Postelection Interviewer, and Place of Residence, for the Pooled 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES Surveys

Independent Variables	(1) Base Model	(2) Base Model Plus Interviewer Race and Place of Residence
Constant	−4.807	−4.535
	(4.539)	(4.270)
1964-NES	−.048	−.168
	(.075)	(.229)
1976-NES	.901	.548
	(1.697)	(.983)
1980-NES	.150	−.266
	(.278)	(.457)
Expect	3.754**	3.570**
	(3.655)	(3.449)
Expect × Some College Education	1.108**	1.116**
	(2.042)	(1.969)
Expect × High Interest	1.101**	.898**
	(2.722)	(2.310)
Expect × High Efficacy	.866**	.980**
	(2.032)	(2.199)
Expect × Black Interviewer		1.716**
		(2.749)
Expect × Black Interviewer × Lived in North, but Not in Central City of SMSA		−3.097**
		(2.200)
Expect × Black Interviewer × Lived in South × 1964-NES		−2.233*
		(1.896)
Comparison with constant		
chi-square	105.0	116.6
df	7	10
p	<.001	<.001
Comparison with base model		
chi-square		11.6
df		3
p		<.01
Total *N*	212	212
Aldrich-Nelson Pseudo-R^2	.331	.355

NOTES: *t*-ratios are in parentheses. Significance tests are two-tailed and are omitted for the constant and the NES dummy variables.

* $p < .1$. ** $p < .05$.

In our expanded equation in column 2, the effects of race of the interviewer are expressed only as joint effects with expectation to vote. This specification is suggested both by our previous research on vote validation and by the analysis in this paper concerning the pattern of assignment of interviewers. Simpler specifications (in particular, an additive model) did not provide as good a fit to the data as this one. A variety of alternative specifications, such as one that explicitly included terms expressing the joint effects of race of the interviewer and residence in the South or the North, produced substantively identical results.

The results obtained with our expanded equation confirm that, in general, blacks who were interviewed by black interviewers were more likely to overreport voting than blacks who were interviewed by white interviewers. There are two exceptions. First, the small minority of blacks respondents residing in the North but outside of the central cities were less likely to overreport voting when interviewed by blacks than when interviewed by whites. However, only 13% of all blacks in the pooled sample lived in the North outside of central cities. Second black respondents in the 1964 NES who lived in the South were also less likely to overreport voting when interviewed by black interviewers than when interviewed by white interviewers.

To interpret these results, it is helpful to use the logit regression coefficients in column 2 of Table 4 to derive the estimated probabilities that respondents who actually did not vote (according to the vote validation) reported that they did. For this type of illustration, it is not possible to show the probability for all possible subsets of respondents, because in order to calculate the effects of a given set of variables it is necessary to hold all other variables constant (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984).

Table 5 shows that black nonvoters who were high in both efficacy and interest in the campaign were much more likely to report (falsely) that they did vote than black nonvoters who were low in both efficacy and interest. This pattern is the same as that found earlier for white respondents (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986).

At the same time, nonvoting black respondents who lived in predominantly black neighborhoods and who were interviewed by blacks were more likely to report that they voted than nonvoting black respondents who were interviewed by whites. For example, among black nonvoters who had low or medium levels of political efficacy and political interest, those who were interviewed by black interviewers and who lived in a northern central city or in the South (other than in 1964) had a .679 probability of reporting that they voted, while otherwise similar blacks who were interviewed by whites had a .276 probability of reporting that they voted. On the whole, the differences due to race of the interviewer

Table 5. Estimated Probabilities That Black Nonvoters Reported That They Voted, by Race of Interviewer, Place of Residence, and Level of Political Efficacy and Interest in the Campaign, for Pooled Respondents from 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES Surveys

	Respondent's Efficacy and Interest	
Interview Condition	Low or Medium Efficacy Low or Medium Interest	High Efficacy High Interest
Black interviewer and lived in central city of northern SMSA or in South	.679	.931
Black interviewer and lived in North outside of central city	.008	.380
Black interviewer and lived in South and was in 1964 NES	.185	.593
White interviewer	.276	.710

NOTES: The estimates are derived from the equation for column 2 in Table 4. The estimates assume that the respondents were in the 1984 NES, said they expected to vote, and had less than some college education. Fixing these characteristics is necessary in order to estimate the probabilities. See Aldrich and Nelson, 1984.

are comparable in magnitude to the differences due to the level of political efficacy and interest.[18]

Why Should Blacks Overreport Voting More When Interviewed by Blacks?

What kind of social interaction could produce these race-of-interviewer effects? A "courtesy to a polite stranger" explanation similar to the one that Schuman and Converse use to explain race-of-interviewer effects on responses to attitude questions seems reasonable. Schuman and Converse (1971:58) wrote that the apparent moderation of statements of interracial hostility when blacks were interviewed by whites could result from a process in which the respondent "wish[es] to avoid offending a polite stranger who has come into his home for a legitimate reason. To accept a guest into your house and then proceed to explain that you neither trust nor feel friendly toward people of his race probably takes more chutzpah than the average respondent possesses."

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[18] This estimate of the effects of race of the interviewer is probably conservative, because (as will be shown later) the race of the interviewer also appears to affect the respondents' interest in the campaign.

In the case of reports on political behavior, however, a race-of-interviewer effect could occur because a black interviewer had come to the respondent's home before the election to ask a long series of questions about the upcoming election—about the candidates, the parties, major campaign issues, and the respondent's intention to vote. This polite stranger, or, in rare cases, a different polite stranger, appears shortly after the election to ask even more questions, including whether the respondent voted in the election.[19] For black respondents who are interviewed by blacks, the respondent–interviewer interchange may stimulate concern about how the election outcome could affect the respondent and other members of his or her race, and could stimulate the respondent's sense of civic obligation to vote.[20]

Despite the preelection stimulus, many respondents still do not vote. But black nonvoters who live in black neighborhoods are less likely when asked by a black interviewer than when asked by a white interviewer to pick one of the proffered excuses than to declare after the election that they had voted.[21] This tendency to overreport is more likely to occur when the interview takes place during a major national election campaign that attempts to mobilize the black vote, particularly in predominantly black areas where these efforts are concentrated.

Confounding of Race-of-Interviewer Effects in Studies of Electoral Participation

If our interpretation of vote overreporting as an effect of the motivation to vote is correct, we should expect to find not only that black *nonvoters* overreport voting more often when interviewed by blacks than when interviewed by whites but also that black *respondents* who are interviewed by blacks *actually* vote more frequently than blacks who are interviewed by whites. Moreover, blacks interviewed by blacks should express a stronger commitment to civic norms supportive of electoral participation.

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[19] The same interviewer is likely to administer both the pre- and postelection questionnaire for each respondent. The 1984 election study is unusual in that about half of the postelection interviews were conducted by telephone, in which case the preelection interviewers did not conduct the postelection follow-up. For an examination of the effects of using the same or a different interviewer in the pre- and postelection surveys on vote overreporting, see Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1985.

[20] The effects of the race of the interviewer on the respondent's concern about the election outcome and sense of citizen duty are tested later; these effects are in the anticipated direction. The effect of black interviewers interviewing black respondents about the election would likely be greater when the content of the survey focuses more sharply on issues that are especially salient to blacks.

[21] The excuses, designed to soften the perceived threat of the question to the respondent, are built into the question. See the Appendix for the question wording.

This is a strong hypothesis, because on the basis of other evidence one would expect the opposite to be true. Since blacks interviewed by blacks are likely to live in predominantly black neighborhoods, in which the levels of education and income are lower than blacks who live in racially integrated neighborhoods, blacks who are interviewed by blacks tend to have socioeconomic backgrounds that contribute to low electoral participation.

Table 6 tests this hypothesis directly, for the pooled set of black respondents in the 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES preelection surveys. The respondents are grouped according to their place of residence into three categories: central cities in the northern SMSAs, other places in the North, and the South. The data on race of the interviewers refer to the *pre*election interviewers. Since this part of the analysis focuses on the effects of the preelection interviews, we do not exclude the cases in which the 1984 postelection interviews were conducted by telephone. Also, since the analysis is no longer restricted to validated nonvoters, the *N*s are increased substantially. However, we exclude southern respondents in the 1964 NES from the cases in the South, because, as shown earlier, their behavior is very different from that of southern black respondents in the 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES surveys.[22]

Table 6 supports the hypothesis of race-of-interviewer effects on both actual voting and the endorsement of civic norms *by black respondents who lived in predominantly black areas*. Both blacks who resided in central cities of northern SMSAs and blacks who resided in the South were much more likely actually to vote and to endorse civic norms supportive of voting if they were interviewed in the preelection survey by a black interviewer than if they were interviewed by a white interviewer.

In contrast, blacks residing in other places in the North (in metropolitan areas outside the central city, in small cities and towns, and in rural areas) display an inconsistent response pattern. They were less likely to express interest in the campaign and less likely actually to vote if they were interviewed by a black than if they were interviewed by a white; at the same time, they were more likely to endorse the citizen duty norm and more likely to express concern about which party wins the election if they were interviewed by a black than if they were interviewed by a white.[23]

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[22] The number of southern black respondents in the 1964 survey is also too small to permit reliable tests for the effects examined in Table 6. Hence, we do not include a separate category for southern blacks in Table 6.

[23] We do not view the results for northern blacks who resided outside the central cities (13% of all black respondents in the pooled samples) as disconfirmation of the basic finding. The size of the apparent vote-stimulation effect of blacks being interviewed by blacks that we find among the black respondents who lived in northern central cities and

Of the measures of civic attitudes listed in Table 6, only the measure of (external) political efficacy does not conform to the general pattern. Blacks who were interviewed by blacks in the South were *less* likely to be high in political efficacy than blacks who were interviewed by whites (though the difference is not statistically significant—$p = .12$ using a two-tailed test). In contrast, there is no apparent race-of-interviewer effect on political efficacy among blacks in northern central cities.

IMPLICATIONS

These results have implications for the study of black political participation beyond the simple evidence that black respondents are more likely to overreport voting when interviewed by blacks.

First, preelection interviews are strong stimuli to electoral participation for many black respondents if they are interviewed by blacks. Not that the preelection interviews have no effect on white respondents or on black respondents who are interviewed by white interviewers, but the special catalytic effect of the interviews on blacks interviewed by blacks stands out. As shown in Table 6, 63.3% of blacks who resided in central cities of the north who were interviewed by blacks *actually* voted, compared to 51.7% of blacks in those areas who were interviewed by whites. The corresponding figures for southern blacks (excluding respondents in the 1964 NES) were 58.1% and 45.2%. This pattern occurs despite the lower socioeconomic status of blacks who were interviewed by blacks than of blacks who were interviewed by whites in those regions.

Further evidence of this race-of-interviewer effect is reported in Table 7, where each column presents a logit regression equation in which the binary dependent variable is one of the attitudinal measures or the actual voting measure reported in Table 6. The equations are patterned on the equation for column 2 of Table 4. These equations test whether black interviewers were more likely than white interviewers either to elicit expressions of support for civic norms or to induce voting, after adjusting for the respondents' education, place of residence, and survey year.

In the equations in which the term expressing the main effect of black interviewers is statistically significant, the term always has a positive sign. In the equations in which the joint effect of black inter-

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the South (other than in 1964) means that the relationship also holds up for black respondents as a whole. But based on the available evidence, we think it is prudent to interpret the effects of the race of the interviewer as conditioned on the racial composition of the neighborhood.

Table 6. Civic Attitudes, Actual Voting, and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Blacks, by Race of Preelection Interviewer and Place of Residence, for Pooled 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES Surveys

Dependent Variables	Place of Residence					
	Central City in North		Other Place in North		In South (1976, 1980, 1984)[a]	
	White Int.	Black Int.	White Int.	Black Int.	White Int.	Black Int.
Said expected to vote						
Percent	81.3	85.0	84.1	85.0	80.3	87.7
Base *N*	176	113	69	20	228	65
Actually voted according to vote validation						
Percent	51.7*	63.3*	54.8	33.3	45.2*	58.1*
Base *N*	147	98	62	18	210	62
Had sense of citizen duty[b]						
Percent	43.7**	65.9**	52.5	57.1	37.3**	61.2**
Base *N*	142	88	61	21	233	67
Said very interested in campaign						
Percent	37.8	41.5	24.7	13.0	34.5**	59.4**
Base *N*	180	118	73	23	238	69
Said cared a good deal which party wins election						
Percent	69.1	76.1	59.7*	81.8*	70.8**	88.2**
Base *N*	178	117	72	22	226	68

Were high in political efficacy						
Percent	37.0	33.3	34.4	31.8	35.9	25.4
Base *N*	165	99	64	22	217	63
Had some college education or more						
Percent	30.5	28.8	35.1	21.7	16.7	17.4
Base *N*	190	118	74	23	239	69
Had less than completed high school education						
Percent	39.5	44.9	31.1	19.0	50.6	56.5
Base *N*	190	118	61	21	239	69
Annual family income ($)[c]						
Mean	13367	11617	13711	18914	10088	6625
Median	9125	8750	10500	13000	6000	4500
Base *N*	166	98	68	22	217	64

NOTES: Only black respondents who were interviewed by a black or a white interviewer are included. Differences in proportions (between cases where interviewers were white and where interviewers were black) significant at $p = .1$ using a two-tailed test are marked by a single asterisk (*). Differences in proportions significant at $p = .05$ using a two-tailed test are marked by a double asterisk (**). Significance tests are not shown for education and income variables.

[a] Southern black respondents in the 1964 NES are excluded.

[b] This is based on the single item that was included in the 1984 NES. The citizen duty questions were not included in the 1964 NES. See the Appendix.

[c] Income is reported in intervals in the NES data. In 1964, the top (open) category was $15,000 or over; in 1976, it was $35,000 or over; in 1980, $50,000 or over; in 1984, $75,000 or over. To calculate the mean and median, incomes in the top category were assumed to be $5,000 above the lower bound for that category. Incomes in the lowest category were assumed to be $500 below the upper bound for that category. Incomes in all other ranges were assumed to be at the midpoint of the range. Adopting plausible alternative assumptions about the distributions of income within categories would not have affected the conclusions based on comparisons of incomes of blacks interviewed by white or black interviewers.

Table 7. Logit Estimates of Probability That Black Respondents Held Certain Civic Attitudes or Actually Voted, by Education, Place of Residence, and Race of Preelection Interviewer, for Pooled 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES Surveys

	Dependent Variable					
Independent Variables	Said Expected to Vote	Actually Voted	Had Sense of Citizen Duty	Was Highly Interested in Campaign	Said Cared Which Party Wins	Was High in Political Efficacy
Constant	1.369	−.303	−.726	−1.010	.740	−.672
	(7.186)	(1.902)	(4.710)	(6.360)	(4.636)	(4.396)
1964-NES	.026	.714	—[a]	.676	.360	−.445
	(.082)	(2.597)		(2.801)	(1.321)	(1.745)
1976-NES	−.387	−.068	.141	.320	−.213	−.324
	(1.530)	(.314)	(.691)	(1.547)	(.987)	(1.434)
1980-NES	.294	.069	.808	.021	.146	−.170
	(.969)	(.313)	(3.727)	(.126)	(.614)	(.758)
Some College Ed.	.610**	.751**	.507**	.684**	.067	.785**
	(2.295)	(3.833)	(2.603)	(3.768)	(.336)	(4.233)

Black Interviewer	.493*	.501**	.870**	.515**	.678**	−.129
	(1.922)	(2.538)	(4.265)	(2.847)	(3.134)	(.623)
Black Interv. × Lived in North	−.375	−1.247**	−.390	−1.935**	.030	−.193
Outside Central City	(.556)	(2.325)	(.804)	(2.989)	(.055)	(.386)
Black Interv. × Lived in South ×	−1.734**	−2.617**	—[a]	−.132	−.044	−.305
1964 NES	(3.790)	(4.289)		(.338)	(.083)	(.617)
Comparison with:						
Constant						
chi-square	30.4	47.4	44.0	43.5	19.6	29.2
df	7	7	5	7	7	7
p	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.01	<.001
Model Excluding Race-of-Interviewer Terms						
chi-square	14.9	28.6	19.1	16.8	12.5	1.5
df	3	3	2	3	3	3
p	<.01	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.01	<.70
Total *N*	743	647	609	775	754	704
Aldrich-Nelson Pseudo-R^2	.039	.068	.067	.053	.025	.040

NOTE: *t*-ratios are in parentheses.

[a] The citizen duty items were not included in the 1964 NES.

* $p < .05$ (one-tailed test). ** $p < .05$ (two-tailed test).

viewers and living in the north outside of a central city is statistically significant, the term always has a negative sign. Similarly, the coefficients for the term expressing the effect of being a southern respondent in the 1964 NES are also always negative. Thus, black interviewers in central cities of northern SMSAs and in the South (other than in 1964) are more likely to elicit from black respondents an endorsement of civic norms (a statement of intention to vote, sense of citizen duty, expression of interest in the campaign) and more likely to induce actual voting than are either white interviewers in general or black interviewers in the North outside of the central cities.

A second implication of these findings is that survey-based comparisons of black and white electoral participation must be alert to possible race-of-interviewer effects. Race differences in reported civic attitudes and participation, as well as race differences in actual levels of participation, can be affected by the assignment of interviewers by race. The same stricture applies to comparisons of black electoral participation by region or by other attributes that are related to the probability that the respondent will be interviewed by a black or a white interviewer. If the race of the interviewer affects responses to civic attitude questions as well as the probability that black respondents actually vote, then the correlations between civic attitudes, actual electoral participation, and reported electoral participation will be different among black survey respondents than they are in the black population.[24]

A third implication is that if one plans to study change in black political participation using either panel data or cross-sectional data, one must take into account the proportion of black respondents in each wave of the panel or in each survey who were interviewed by blacks. Since the racial composition of the interviewer staff for the NES surveys has changed substantially over time, trends in civic attitudes and electoral participation among black respondents are probably partly an artifact of trends in the racial composition of the interviewers.

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR THESE RESULTS?

It is difficult to conceive of a plausible explanation for these results other than that they result from race-of-interviewer effects. One explanation that can be rejected is that blacks interviewed by blacks in the recent presidential election year surveys were more highly educated or had higher incomes than blacks interviewed by whites. As Table 6 shows, neither of these conditions was true for black respondents from the South or from central cities in the North. Furthermore, as shown in Table 7, even after the respondents' education is taken directly into account, the effect of the race of the interviewer remains.

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[24] A related finding, which we cannot discuss in detail, is that the vote-stimulation effect found among black respondents interviewed by black interviewers is much stronger among female respondents than among males, though it occurs for both sexes. Since the vast majority of interviewers are females, the interviewer–respondent interaction that produces the pattern of responses that we have analyzed may be partly a product of the interviewer's sex. These results also mean that the reported findings, based on NES data, that black women are more politicized than black men (Baxter and Lansing, 1983), could be an artifact of the race and sex composition of the interviewers.

Another type of sample selectivity that could account for the results is that blacks interviewed by blacks could be self-selected on the basis of their political interest and involvement. Given the declining response rates in surveys in central cities in recent years, it is possible that those black respondents who do participate in surveys are relatively highly politically involved, and that blacks in central cities who are interviewed by blacks are especially likely to be self-selected as being highly politically involved. That this hypothesized selectivity by race of the interviewer is not correlated with selectivity on the basis of socioeconomic status, however, calls this explanation into question.

Although we cannot completely rule out a "self-selection of the politically involved" explanation, we think it is implausible. If such systematic selectivity by race of the interviewer does occur, however, it should be regarded as partly an effect of the race of the interviewer. A more plausible explanation is that blacks in the South and in northern central cities have been mobilized to vote in recent presidential elections, and that lengthy survey interviews conducted in the midst of the campaign, particularly by black interviewers, further stimulate their concern about the electoral outcome.

That this is an effect of *preelection interviews in presidential election years* is bolstered by evidence that the relationships shown in Table 6 for the pooled 1964–1976–1980–1984 respondents are not found in the 1978 NES survey, which consisted only of a postelection survey in a midterm election year. For example, in the 1978 NES, 26.3% of black respondents in northern central cities who were interviewed by blacks actually voted (according to the vote validation), compared to 39.3% of blacks who were interviewed by whites (data not shown). Thus in 1978 the relation between the race of the interviewer and the percentage of black respondents who voted in northern central cities was the reverse of that found among the pooled sample from the four presidential election surveys. Whether the difference in the results is an outcome of the absence of a preelection survey in 1978, the low saliency of the election, or the combination of these factors, cannot be determined from available data.[25]

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[25] One way to sort out the relative importance of the two factors in NES surveys would be to include a supplemental sample of respondents (both blacks and whites) who were interviewed only in the postelection survey in a presidential election year.

Conclusions

Most survey data are the product of an interview. In such cases, the stimulus is the *interviewer* reading a question, showing a visual aid, and probing for an answer. Hence, when differences in interviewer characteristics are systematically related to the responses, changes in interviewer characteristics can produce systematic changes in survey results.

Our research suggests that the variety of survey responses that are affected by the race of the interviewer is greater than has been assumed. In particular, race-of-interviewer effects confound the study of some political attitudes and behavior that have no overt racial content.

More important, our analysis suggests that matching the respondent and the interviewer by race does not simply generate *response effects*—error in the answers (Sudman and Bradburn, 1974; Bradburn, 1983). Rather, for many black respondents, the preelection interview appears to *induce changes in stated attitudes and actual behavior*.

To assure comparability of data from one survey to the next, or from one survey subpopulation to another, any large and systematic source of variation needs to be examined and, if possible, controlled either when the data are produced or when they are analyzed. If the public-use National Election Study and General Social Survey data files included information about the characteristics of interviewers, researchers could then check for, and possibly correct for, some kinds of interviewer effects.[26]

This analysis also demonstrates that the stimulus to electoral participation from the preelection interview affects not only the reported percentages of respondents who vote but also measures of civic attitudes—measures that are frequently employed to explain the level of turnout. To date, researchers who have expressed concern about the implausibly high reported and validated turnout among NES respondents have been concerned only about the error in the measurement of turnout. However, when the preelection interview stimulates the respondent's concern about the electoral outcome, increases the respondent's sense of civic duty, and increases the likelihood that the respondent will actually vote, it inflates not only the reported and actual vote turnout relative to that of the population from which the sample is drawn, but also the reported strength of the interrelations among all variables that are so stimulated—compared to the "true" interrelations among those variables in the population. This is a problem in the analysis of political participation of both blacks and whites based on NES surveys.

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[26] We propose the provision of information on a few interviewer characteristics: race, sex, age, education, and years of experience as an interviewer (or years of experience with the current survey organization).

Appendix: Question Wording, Recoding Procedures, and Construction of Composite Variables

Vote validation. Although the SRC's coding of self-reported electoral participation is consistent across time, the codes used for the vote validation variable differ from year to year. Only the coding for 1978 is free of ambiguities. The procedures for constructing the vote validation measures for 1964, 1976, 1978, and 1980 are spelled out in Abramson and Claggett, 1984. For the 1984 survey, we use Variable 1132, the summary measure for the individual voter record validation. Respondents coded 1 are classified as voters, while respondents coded 2, 3, 10, 12, 13, and 14 are classified as nonvoters. All other codes are classified as Not Ascertained (missing).

The first two vote validation studies (1964 and 1976) attempted to determine the registration and voting status only for respondents to the postelection survey. The 1978 NES (as with all midterm NES surveys from 1958 on) included only a postelection survey. However, in both 1980 and 1984 the SRC/CPS attempted to validate the votes of all respondents to the preelection survey, including those who were not in the postelection survey. For the study of vote overreporting, we cannot use respondents who were not in the postelection surveys. Therefore, we exclude from our analysis of vote overreporting respondents who were not in the postelection surveys.

External political efficacy. The items are:

> People like me don't have any say about what the government does.
> I don't think public officials care much what people like me think.

Respondents who disagreed with both items are scored as "High"; those who agreed with one but disagreed with the other are scored as "Medium"; and those who agreed with both are scored as "Low." Respondents with DK or NA responses to one of these questions are scored as high or low according to their response on the remaining item. Those with DK or NA responses to both items are scored as missing. The same scoring was employed by Abramson and Aldrich (1982:510) and Abramson (1983:166–167).

Citizen duty. Only one of the four standard citizen duty items was asked in the 1984 NES (see Abramson, Silver, and Anderson, 1987):

> If a person doesn't care how an election comes out he [then that person] shouldn't vote in it.

"Disagree" responses are scored as 1, "Agree" response as 0. DK and NA responses are treated as missing. We use only this single item in the pooled data analysis based on the 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES surveys.

Political interest. In the presidential election surveys, the item is:

> Some people don't pay much attention to the political campaigns. How about you, would you say that you have been very much interested, some-

> what interested, or not very much interested in following the political campaigns so far this year?

Respondents who are "Very much interested" are labeled "High"; those who are "Somewhat interested" are labeled "Medium"; and those who are "Not much interested" are labeled "Low." Responses coded DK or NA are treated as missing.

Concern about electoral outcome. The item is:

> Generally speaking, would you say that you personally care a good deal which party wins the presidential election this fall or that you don't care very much which party wins?

The responses to this item are collapsed into two categories: "High Concern" and "Low Concern." "Care a good deal" is labeled as "High," "Don't care very much" as "Low." Answers coded DK or NA are treated as missing.

Expectation of voting. In preelection surveys, respondents were asked:

> So far as you know now, do you expect to vote in November or not?

All affirmative answers are collapsed into a single "Yes" category (scored as 1); negative answers are recoded as "No" (0). "Pro–con, depends," DK, and NA are treated as missing.

Self-report of voting. In the postelection surveys, the item was:

> In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because (they weren't old enough) they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time. How about you—did you vote in the elections this November?

Answer coded "Not old enough," "R refused to say whether voted," DK, or NA are scored as missing.

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UNDERREPORTING OF SUBSTANCE USE IN A NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL YOUTH COHORT

INDIVIDUAL AND INTERVIEWER EFFECTS

BARBARA S. MENSCH AND
DENISE B. KANDEL

Abstract The quality of drug data in the 1984 wave of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth is explored. Comparisons with other national surveys indicate that underreporting of use of illicit drugs other than marijuana appears to have taken place, and that light users of these drugs are underrepresented among the self-acknowledged users. Comparison with marijuana use reported four years earlier indicates that experimental marijuana users are much less likely than extensive users to acknowledge involvement. Even after controlling for frequency of use, underreporting is more common among terminal high school dropouts and minorities. Not only individual characteristics but field conditions also contribute to underreporting. Familiarity with the interviewer, as measured by number of prior interviewing contacts, depresses drug use reporting. We speculate that interviewer familiarity increases salience of normative standards and that participants respond not only in terms of their past familiarity but also in terms of their subjective expectations regarding the probability of a future encounter with the interviewer.

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The quality of data involving self-reports of deviant, disapproved, or illegal behaviors has been a recurrent concern of survey researchers (Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis, 1981; Huizinga and Elliott, 1984; O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1983; Bachman and O'Malley, 1981; Bradburn et al., 1978). With the proliferation over the last fifteen years of surveys on the use of illicit drugs, this concern has focused in particular on the nature of drug use reports. The consensus among drug researchers has been that most reports, based either on self-administered questionnaires, whether numerically identifiable or anonymous, or personal interviews with or without self-administered forms, are valid and reliable (Ball, 1967; Malvin and Moskowitz, 1983; Robins, 1973; Haberman et al., 1972; Robins and Murphy, 1967; Single, Kandel, and Johnson, 1975; Rouse, Kozel, and Richards, 1985). Methods to establish validity include comparison of self-reported drug use with independent urine samples, internal construct validity, or similarity of best friends' reports. In particular, underreporting has been thought not to be a problem, although there may be telescoping of recall such that respondents tend to report proportionally more drug use within the last 30 days than they do for the prior 12 months (Bachman and O'Malley, 1981). However, this pattern is neither strongly nor consistently associated with any respondent characteristics (O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1983). In our own research, we established that adolescents were unlikely to underreport their use of marijuana and other illicit drugs and that underreporting, to the extent that it occurred, was due to the apparent forgetting of those who had experimented with the drugs only once or twice rather than to denial by heavy users (Single, Kandel, and Johnson, 1975).

Some survey researchers, however, have expressed reservations about the quality of reporting of drug use. In a national sample of 1,172 adults conducted by NORC in 1975, questions on illegal and socially undesirable behaviors, including drug use, induced respondent anxiety. Those who were particularly uneasy (over 40% for a question on lifetime prevalence of marijuana use) were less inclined to report involvement (Bradburn et al., 1978). Type of setting (private vs. not private), type of sample (addict vs. not addict), type of question (current use vs. past use), and degree of social undesirability (marijuana vs. heroin) were mentioned in a recent report by the National Institute on Drug Abuse on validity issues in self-reported drug use data as being potentially threatening to accuracy and completeness of drug reporting (Rouse, Kozel, and Richards, 1985).

We here report the results of a study based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) in which serious and somewhat unexpected underreporting of the use of certain drugs appears to have taken place. The study was executed to generate epidemiological data on the prevalence of illicit drugs for groups in the population that had heretofore not been included in sufficiently large numbers to provide such estimates, in particular, minorities and school dropouts. Indeed, the NLS Youth Cohort is the most comprehensive extant sample of young people in the United States.

Factors, both individual and contextual, underlying the underreporting are presented. We find that the underreporting is not randomly distributed in the sample but is more prominent among certain social groups, generally those found in prior epidemiological surveys to have lower prevalence rates of self-reported use. Furthermore, it is affected by specific features of the interview situation, in particular, degree of familiarity with the interviewer. It appears that underreporting is more likely to occur when individual attributes or factors within the interview increase respondents' propensity to provide socially normative responses. The implications of the findings for survey research are discussed.

Data Source

SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

In 1984, five minutes of drug-related questions were added to the interview schedule administered to participants in the sixth wave of the ongoing Youth Cohort (NLSY), a national longitudinal survey of 12,069 young adults conducted since 1979 by the Center for Human Resource Research of Ohio State University (Wolpin, 1983). The Youth Cohort sample is a multistage stratified area probability sample representative of individuals born in the years 1957–1964 in the coterminous United States. The study includes youths who are usually not well represented in national samples—not only members of minority groups but also high school dropouts and the unemployed. Blacks (*N* = 2,172), Hispanics (*N* = 1,480), and economically disadvantaged white youths (*N* = 1,643) were oversampled for a supplemental sample, and 1,280 young persons in the military (as of September 1978) were also included. Respondents have been interviewed annually through personal household interviews averaging about 1½ hours in length. The completion rate for the base year was 89.7% for the cross-sectional sample, 88.7% for the basic supplemental sample, and 71.5% for the military sample (Frankel, McWilliams, and Spencer, 1983). Reinterviewing rates have been consistently very high, with 95% of the original cohort reinterviewed for the sixth time in 1984—6,062 males and 6,009 females aged 19–27.

While the initial focus of the survey was primarily on the labor market experience of young people, a number of lifestyle and health-related questions were added in successive waves. In 1984, a series of drug-related questions was included along with the earlier battery of questions on education, labor force participation, marriage, fertility, and alcohol usage. Respondents were asked separate questions about cigarettes and marijuana. For illicit drugs other than marijuana and nonmedical use of pills and tranquilizers, respondents were shown a card, read a list of drugs, and asked for each whether or not they had ever used it. For each drug used, further series of questions inquired about lifetime frequency of use, recency of use in the last year, frequency of use in the last month, and age at first use. Response categories were designed to ensure comparability with two national drug-related surveys described in further detail below, Monitoring the Future (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986) and the General Household Survey (Miller et al., 1983). Additional questions were asked about lifetime, last-year, and last-month frequency of use for each of three classes of medically prescribed psychotropics (sedatives, stimulants, and minor tranquilizers). In addition, respondents were asked to fill in a time chart indicating the months from 1979 to the present when they had used marijuana. Refusal rates were less than 1% for most drug questions, apparently indicating that respondents were comfortable answering these questions. However, those who have investigated response bias in surveys on socially undesirable or illegal activities suggest that most people want to appear cooperative, and therefore provide an answer regardless of how uneasy the questioning makes them (Bradburn et al., 1978).

As in preceding waves of data collection, respondents were assured complete confidentiality. No names appeared on the interview schedule, only an identification number. In addition, to assure the confidentiality of the drug-related reports, a grant of confidentiality was specifically obtained from the Surgeon General guaranteeing that none of the records could be subpoenaed for any legal proceedings, whether at the local, state, or federal levels.

The fieldwork was carried out by NORC of the University of Chicago. As reflected in the very high completion rates, participation in the study has been excellent. There was no reason to expect less than candid answers. Yet, comparison with data from other surveys suggests that underreporting may have occurred.

COMPARISON STUDIES

In the absence of an independent criterion that would validate the respondents' drug reports, such as biological assays, the quality of the drug self-reports was established through comparison with two other national drug surveys. Monitoring the Future (MF) is an annual nationwide cross-sectional survey of approximately 16,000 high school seniors based on self-administered questionnaires collected in classrooms (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986). Although respondents were asked to give their names and addresses, the questionnaires and address pages linked by ID number were collected separately and sealed in different envelopes. Approximately 30% of each birth cohort is not represented in the sample, namely, nonparticipants among seniors enrolled in high school (18%–20% of each class) and those who have already dropped out of school (approximately 15%–17% of the age group). The General Household Survey (GHS) is a nationwide survey of the general population aged 12 and over, excluding students living in college dormitories and persons with no fixed addresses, carried out every two or three years (Miller et al., 1983). Data are collected through personal household interviews, but the drug questions are answered through a self-administered form that is sealed in a separate envelope. Although a new survey was fielded in 1985, the last survey for which data are published was completed in 1982, when approximately 1,280 young adults aged 18–25 were interviewed (Miller et al., 1983).

Members of the same birth cohorts can be identified in each study and their responses compared to those obtained in the NLSY sample.

Results

EXTENT OF UNDERREPORTING

Lifetime prevalence of the use of various licit and illicit drugs was compared across the three studies.

In order to ensure meaningful comparisons with MF, an age and education restricted group from the NLSY corresponding to the same birth cohort represented by a particular high school graduating class and limited to high school graduates was examined alongside the high school seniors who were interviewed one or more years earlier. Thus, high school seniors from 1983, aged 18 on the average, were compared with 19-year-old high school graduates from the 1984 NLSY as members of the 1964–65 birth cohorts, seniors from 1982 were compared with 20-year-old graduates from the 1984 NLSY as members of the 1963–64 birth cohorts, and so on. Assuming that most high school seniors are 17 or 18 years old, roughly the same birth cohort is examined one, two, three, and four years later in the NLSY. The expectation is that lifetime prevalence in the NLSY will be at least as great and most likely greater than in the other studies. Indeed, the sample is a more complete representation of these birth cohorts and is older, so that the population is exposed to the risk of drug use initiation for additional time. This risk appears to terminate at about age 20 or 21 for marijuana but not until the mid-twenties for cocaine (Kandel and Logan, 1984; Raveis and Kandel, 1987; O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1984). However, because of the recent decline in the use of illicit drugs other than cocaine, for which prevalence rates are believed to be still increasing although at a much slower rate (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986), it is difficult to predict just how much greater the prevalence rates should be in the NLSY than in MF.

Table 1 indicates that use of the licit drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, is higher among the older respondents in the NLSY than in MF. As regards marijuana, by contrast, lifetime prevalence is somewhat lower among 19-year-olds in the 1984 NLSY than among high school seniors in 1983. The lifetime levels of use are slightly higher in the NLSY for the two older cohorts (21 and 22) but less than anticipated given that initiation of marijuana continues beyond the age of 18, albeit at a substantially reduced rate (Kandel and Logan, 1984). For simplicity, data pertaining only to 19- and 22-year-olds are presented in Table 1.

For illicit drugs other than marijuana there appears to be considerable underreporting of lifetime prevalence of use in the NLSY. Underreporting varies by substance and appears to be lowest for cocaine (44% lower than the proportion of users in the 1983 wave of MF) and highest for the inhalants (over 85% lower).

Substantial differences also appear in comparisons with the 1982 GHS. When interviewed for that survey, respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25, which would make them 20–27 in 1984, belonging for the most part to the same birth cohorts as the NLS youth sample. Lifetime use of all illicit drugs, except marijuana and stimulants, is strikingly *lower* in the NLSY. Approximately half as many young persons report experimentation with hallucinogens and nonprescription tranquilizers, and over a third fewer report involvement with cocaine in the NLSY than in the household survey. There are even lower reported levels of lifetime use of prescription drugs (see Table 1).

Reported current use, for both the last 30 days and the last 12 months, is also low. For example, in 1984, 40% of high school seniors reported using marijuana in the last 12 months and 25% in the last 30 days (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986), compared with 33% and 16% of 19-year-old high school graduates in the NLSY.

If, as it appears, drug prevalence estimates are too low in the NLSY, it is important to determine whether differential underreporting exists according to degree of involvement. Are light users more likely to forget or less inclined to admit experimentation? Or are heavy users, who are more likely to be current users and may therefore feel particu-

Table 1. Comparison of Lifetime Prevalence of Use of Various Substances and Frequency of Use Among Users in the NLSY and Other Studies for Different Survey Years and Birth Cohorts

	MF (1983)	NLSY[a] (1984)	MF (1980)	NLSY[a] (1984)	GHS (1982)	NLSY (1984)
Age at survey	17–18	19	17–18	22	18–25	19–27
Birth cohort	64–65	64	61–62	61–62	56–64	57–64
Drugs ever used						
Alcohol	93%	94%	93%	98%	95%	96%
Cigarettes	71	73	71	79	77	82
Marijuana	57	52	60	62	64	65
Hallucinogens	12	4	13	9	21	10
Cocaine	16	9	16	16	28	18
Heroin	1	1	1	0	1	1
Stimulants	35	16	26	21	18	22
Sedatives	14	4	15	8	19	10

Tranquilizers	13	3	15	7	15	8
Inhalants	14	2	12	1	—	—
Amphetamines Rx	[b]		[b]		4	3
Barbiturates Rx	[b]		[b]		10	3
Minor Tranq. Rx	[b]		[b]		19	9
Total *N*	16,300	794	15,900	1,141	1,283	12,069
% of Users Using[c]	40+ times		40+ times		100+ times	
Marijuana	33	26	41	38	38	28
Total *N*	9,289	414	9,551	702	815	7,765
Cocaine	7	25	8	18	9	13
Total *N*	2,267	72	2,503	182	362	2,150

NOTES: MF = Monitoring the Future (Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1984). NLS = National Longitudinal Survey. Secondary analysis of data. GHS = General Household Survey (Miller et al., 1983).

[a] Restricted to high school graduates.

[b] Not asked.

[c] Different frequency categories were used in MF and GHS.

larly threatened, less willing to report drug involvement? We are assuming that frequency of use among the self-acknowledged users is reasonably accurate (Bradburn et al., 1978).

Comparisons with the two other surveys of lifetime frequency among self-identified drug users from the same birth cohorts are also provided in Table 1.

Although some aggregation was necessary in order to form comparable frequency of use categories, initial differences in scale intervals could undermine comparisons. Both Monitoring the Future and the General Household Survey are more detailed at the lower end of the scale, which may have had the effect of producing a greater number of lighter users relative to the NLSY. Greater detail at the upper end provides a distinction between moderate and heavy users although recall accuracy may be sacrificed. It is undoubtedly more difficult to remember the exact number of frequent than of rare events (O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1983).

Differences between the NLSY and other surveys vary according to drug class. Reported degree of marijuana involvement is lower in the NLSY, especially in comparison to the GHS. Among users, over one-third more report a lifetime frequency of at least one hundred times in the GHS than in the NLSY. However, given the age pattern of marijuana initiation, 18- to 25-year-old users in the GHS would be more likely to be recent initiators than those aged 19–27 in the NLSY and were expected to have lower lifetime frequency of use. While the distribution for the 1980 MF is virtually analogous to that of 22-year-olds in the NLSY, the distribution for the 1983 MF is somewhat different from that of 19-year-olds. Among 19-year-olds, heavier users are underrepresented in the NLSY. In general then, most marijuana users in the NLSY appear to be willing to admit some involvement, although they are less willing to acknowledge heavy use.

By contrast, for other illicit drugs, e.g., amphetamines, barbiturates, cocaine, and hallucinogens, lifetime frequency among self-reported users is consistently higher in the NLSY. While one-fourth of the 19-year-olds in the NLSY, who indicate some experience with cocaine, claim to have used it at least 40 times, fewer than 10% of the cocaine users among 1983 high school seniors do so. The difference is greater than would be expected from the fact that the NLSY sample is one year older than the high school seniors. In every comparison for each illicit drug other than marijuana, lifetime prevalence among acknowledged users is higher in the NLSY than in the other two surveys. (Data are not given for drugs other than cocaine.) The higher frequency of use coupled with the underreporting of lifetime prevalence suggests that those who may have denied any experience with illicit drugs other than marijuana were less intensely involved than those who admitted use.

CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSES OVER TIME

One advantage of longitudinal surveys is that responses can be examined for consistency over time. In the second wave of the NLS youth survey in 1980, a series of 21 closed-ended questions were asked about participation in delinquent activities during the last year, including two questions about drug consumption. Respondents were instructed to fill in a form which stated:

> For each activity below, please check which best describes the number of times you have done it.
> 1. smoked marijuana or hashish ("pot," "grass," "hash")
> 2. used any drugs or chemicals to get high or for kicks, except marijuana

The respondents were reminded verbally that reporting was to be confined to prior year activities. An envelope was provided for the form, which the interviewer sealed in the respondent's presence.

In the 1984 survey, respondents were questioned not only on current, past year, and lifetime experience with drugs, but also on when they had first used each drug and, specifically, in which months they had used marijuana from January 1979 to the 1984 interview. Thus, it was possible to investigate inconsistencies for reported prevalence and timing of marijuana use. Excessive noncomparability of question wording precludes consistency checking for usage of illicit drugs other than marijuana.

All those who reported last-year use in 1980 could be expected to report some lifetime use in 1984. The analysis of the incidence and characteristics of deniers, those who in 1980 said they used but claimed in 1984 never to have done so, sheds light on the pattern rather than the degree of underreporting. The number of these inconsistent reports provides only a lower bound estimate of the frequency of underreporting because prevalence figures from MF and the GHS would suggest that a certain number of respondents who claim in both surveys not to have experimented with drugs are in fact users. Furthermore, no consistency check can be made between lifetime reported use in the two periods. The retrospective reports themselves may not be completely accurate regarding timing of use.

Based on annual drug use reported in 1980 in conjunction with the retrospective information obtained in 1984 on the timing of marijuana use since 1979, the proportion of denials as well as potential recall errors were calculated. Only a small fraction of those who reported use within the last year in the 1980 survey fail to report any lifetime use in 1984, 8% among men and 12% among women. Correspondingly, 20% of men and 10% of women who reported in 1980 that they had not used marijuana within the last year reported in 1984 that they were using marijuana in 1980.

Table 2. Consistency of Marijuana Use Reporting Between 1980 and 1984

Response Pattern	1980 Survey Reported Use in Last Year	1984 Survey Reported Use in 1979–80	Time of use Reported for 1979–80 Nonuser with Lifetime Involvement	Male	Female
Consistent	No	No	—	27%	36%
	No	No	After 1979–80	6	7
	No	No	Before 1979–80	5	6
	Yes	Yes	—	37	28
Inconsistent	Yes	No	—	4	6
	Yes	No	After 1979–80	6	6
	Yes	No	Before 1979–80	5	7
	No	Yes	—	10	6
Total *N*				5,561	5,460

Respondents in the cohort were classified according to their consistency status (Table 2). While approximately one-fourth of the reports are inconsistent, a much greater proportion of young people misremember periods of marijuana use than claim never to have used the drug. The proportion of those who fail to report use is counterbalanced by the proportion of those who did not report use initially, but do so now. Those who reported using marijuana within the last year in 1980 but claim in 1984 that they never used constitute a small proportion of the total sample of men (4%) and women (6%).

A comparison of responses to questions on lifetime prevalence of alcohol in the 1982 and 1983 waves of the NLSY suggests that underreporting is considerably less frequent for alcohol than for marijuana, although differences between surveys in the recall interval, one year in one case but four in the other, could alone account for these differences in accuracy. Only 1.4% of youth who reported having had a drink by the 1982 interview deny ever drinking in 1983. Questions on problem drinking, a presumably more sensitive behavior, result in much greater inconsistency over time. Of those who admitted in 1982 ever having drinking-related problems in school or work, on the next interview in 1983 only about half reported a lifetime problem for school and slightly more than a third for work (Crowley, 1985).

SUBGROUP DIFFERENCE IN INCONSISTENCY

In line with results from prior investigations, we find that misreporting varies inversely with degree of drug involvement. Experimental marijuana users are much less likely to acknowledge subsequently any involvement than those who have used the drug more frequently. Nearly one-fifth of females and 14% of males who claimed to have used marijuana 1 to 5 times in 1980 report no lifetime use in 1984 compared to 7% and 4%, respectively, of those who reported using at least 50 times. Single, Kandel, and Johnson (1975) argue from similar findings that failure to report drug use is a consequence of faulty memory rather than deliberate misrepresentation. Because the most frequent users constitute less than 1% of the total sample, however, their denial has a negligible effect on epidemiological estimates. Still, a question emerges as to whether reporting nonuse, even among casual users, reflects poor recall or conscious denial. While in some social circles the taking of drugs has become acceptable, it is still an illegal, and, presumably, unforgettable act. It may be that those who are infrequent users do not want to be regarded as drug users and provide socially desirable responses.

To determine whether differential nonreporting is also present in various sociodemographic groups, the percentage of inconsistent marijuana responses was calculated separately for selected respondents' characteristics.

Inconsistent responses vary significantly by race, school dropout status, and region for both sexes, as well as marital status and rural–urban residence for women and age for men[1] (Table 3). For men and women, the most striking differential is for race. Nonreporting of drug use is twice as common among blacks and Hispanics as among whites. Nonreporting is less frequent among urban residents and those who have attended college among men and women and among the maritally disrupted among women. The pattern of nonreporting by region differs for the sexes. Self-reported marijuana users in 1980 residing in the Northeast for men and in the South for women are more likely to claim in 1984 that they never used.

These differentials may be attenuated or disappear entirely once frequency of use is controlled. If response inconsistency is primarily a function of intensity of involvement, the underreporting observed in the NLSY may be relatively benign for analyses of the causes and consequences of drug use. To investigate differential underreporting, while controlling for intensity of use, a logistic regression predicting response consistency was performed among those who reported use in

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1. Since the NLSY is not a simple random sample, the reported variances may be too small, occasionally leading to the incorrect conclusion of significant differences. Design effects that give the ratio of the variances for the NLSY to the variances for a simple random sample are not available for the 1984 wave. For earlier waves they range from 1.0 (no effect) to 1.8.

Table 3. Characteristics of Inconsistent Respondents: Proportion of Those Reporting Marijuana Use in 1980 Who Claim Never to Have Used in 1984

	Male		Female	
	Percent	*N*	Percent	*N*
Total Sample of 1980 Users	9	2,872	12	2,499
Age				
19–21	11	786	13	752
22–24	8	1,151	11	1,049
25–27	7	935	14	698
Diff. among categories	**		n.s.	
Education				
Dropout—no diploma	12	528	15	343
Dropout—GED or diploma	6	300	7	216
High school graduate	10	1,016	14	998
Some college	6	950	9	874
Diff. among categories	***		***	
Marital status				
Never married	8	1,927	12	1,296
Married	9	794	14	949
Sep./div./wid.	8	150	5	253
Diff. among categories	n.s.		***	
Rural/urban				
Urban	8	2,516	11	2,181
Rural	11	314	19	281
Diff. among categories	n.s.		***	
Region				
Northeast	11	609	10	540
North-central	6	770	13	672
South	9	833	17	766
West	7	626	6	502
Diff. among categories	**		***	
Labor force				
Working	9	2,126	12	1,543
Unemployed	8	422	14	191
Keeping house	—	—	14	506
In school	6	291	11	245
Diff. among categories	n.s.		n.s.	
Race				
Hispanic	13	156	22	123
Black	14	343	22	276
White/other	7	2,373	10	2,110
Diff. among categories	***		***	
1980 reported frequency				
1–5 times	14	1,038	19	1,055
6–49	7	692	7	795
50+	4	1,143	7	649
Diff. among categories	***		***	

NOTES: *F*-test used to assess significance. N.s. = not significant.
** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

1980 using the same set of variables that were included in the descriptive analysis shown in Table 3 (data not presented).

Frequency of use remains the best predictor in the multivariate analysis. While the odds of claiming no lifetime involvement are greatly increased if frequency of use in 1980 was low, a number of other significant variables indicate that differential misreporting according to socioeconomic characteristics is nevertheless present. Although results differ slightly for the two sexes, both among men and women, blacks and Hispanics are less likely than whites to report use, as are high school dropouts who have not returned to school compared with respondents who have attended college.

FIELD CONDITION EFFECTS ON REPORTING

In addition to individual characteristics, we investigated the potential effects of the interviewing situation itself on respondents' responses. In particular, we examined those field conditions that may increase the awareness of normative standards for respondents and make it more difficult for them to report behaviors that contravene these standards. Two such factors were examined: presence of a third party during the interview, and whether or not the respondent knew the interviewer.

Presence of others during the interview. Drug questions were asked and answered verbally in the NLSY, which could undermine reporting, especially if a parent was within hearing range. While the presence of others during the interview might be expected to influence respondents' answers (Turner and Martin, 1984), reporting of socially desired behaviors, such as voting, and threatening behaviors, such as gambling, drinking, and sexual intercourse, appear to be unaffected by third-party presence (Silver, Abramson, and Anderson, 1986; Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates, 1979). Results from studies evaluating specifically the effect of privacy on self-reported illicit drug use are contradictory. NORC found in 1975 in a national sample of adults 18 years and older that use of marijuana and nonprescription stimulants and depressants were somewhat underreported when spouses were present; marijuana and depressant use were also underreported when a child was present. By contrast, if a friend was in the room, illicit drug use was overreported. While too few cases of parental presence were observed to warrant presentation of the data, it was for these cases that the strongest response effects occurred (Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates, 1979). Reporting was affected by presence of parents in the youth sample of the 1979 and 1982 waves of the General Household Survey on Drug Abuse (Gfroerer, 1985), but not in samples of high school–aged students (Zanes and Matsoukas, 1979; Rootman and Smart, 1985).

We find that the presence of a parent at any time during the NLSY interview produces no significant reduction in levels of reported illicit drug use. Among the one-third of the sample still living with parents, lifetime involvement with marijuana is 57% for those with parents present and 61% for those alone with the interviewer (compared with 67% for those who live on their own). Not only is the difference between the first two groups unexpectedly small, too few respondents had parents present during part or all of the interview (3.0%) to account for the underreporting observed in the total sample. The possibility remains that parents not actually present may be close by, and therefore that mere residence in the parental household lowers reporting, a conclusion supported by results from a drug survey comparing self-reports at school and in the home (Rootman and Smart, 1985). Alternatively, the relationship between residence and reported drug involvement may reflect the fact that residents in parental homes may be more likely to conform and less inclined to experiment with drugs (O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1984).

Interviewer familiarity. The longitudinal nature of the NLSY survey could itself be responsible for the underreporting of drug use. A concerted attempt is made by NORC to retain the same interviewers from round to round of the study. In 1984, 78% of the 368 interviewers had participated in earlier waves (Campbell, 1984). The respondents could have developed a good rapport with their questioners so that, paradoxically, verbal reporting of delinquent and socially undesirable or sensitive acts may have proved difficult. 1984 was the first year respondents were asked to report on illegal activities aloud, although they had been asked about abortions in 1983 and 1982; in 1980, questions on delinquency were answered using a self-administered form.

Interviewers' prior expectations about the difficulty of asking and obtaining accurate responses to questions on socially undesirable or embarassing behaviors have been shown to have only a moderate influence on nonresponse rates and prevalence levels (Sudman et al., 1977). To the best of our knowledge, interviewer familiarity has not previously been directly investigated since Hyman's (1954) groundbreaking work on the effects of interviewers' social involvement on response patterns. However, researchers have concluded that "the more personal the data gathering mode" and the more personable the interviewer, "the greater the likelihood of lower data quality" and "item nonresponse" (Frey, 1983:46–47). Just as mail surveys are less personal than face-to-face surveys, face-to-face surveys with an unknown interviewer are less personal than those with a known one.

In order to test the hypothesis that rates of drug use reported in a personal interview would be depressed by familiarity with the interviewer, we classified respondents according to the number of times

Table 4. Reported Lifetime Prevalence of Marijuana and Cocaine by Number of Times Responded to the Same Interviewer as in 1984

Number of Previous Contacts with Same Interviewer or with 1984 Interviewer	Ever Used Marijuana		Ever Used Cocaine		Total *N*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Never same interviewer	71%	68%	30%	19%	870	709
Never '84 interviewer	72	58	23	14	1,543	1,741
'84 interviewer once before (2 contacts altogether)	69	61	22	14	1,104	1,008
'84 interviewer twice before (3 contacts altogether)	68	60	20	14	883	873
'84 interviewer three times before (4 contacts altogether)	65	56	16	11	1,336	1,372
Differences among categories	**	***	***	***		

NOTE: *F*-test used to assess significance.
** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

they had been contacted by the same interviewer. A maximum of three prior contacts could be measured since interviewer codes were not available for the first two waves of the study. Furthermore, respondents who had never previously interacted with the 1984 interviewer were separated into those who had never had the same interviewer at least twice before and those who did, although not the person they faced in 1984. The results strongly support the hypothesis. If for the prior three waves respondents had never been interviewed by the same person, reported involvement in drugs is much higher than for any other group. Reports by those who had always been interviewed by the same interviewer are consistently the lowest (Table 4).

The more socially unacceptable the substance, the stronger the association. For example, among men reported cocaine use is 1.8 times higher but marijuana use 1.1 times higher for those who never had the same interviewer compared with those who always did. The reporting behavior of the middle three groups, and especially of the second group, is noteworthy. Respondents who had never met the 1984 interviewer previously but had been interviewed by the same person two or three times in the past (group 2) are as unlikely to report the use of marijuana or cocaine as those respondents who had faced the 1984 interviewer at least once in the past (group 3). This finding suggests that when faced with an interviewer, respondents respond not only in terms of their *past* familiarity with the person but also in terms of their subjective expectations regarding the probability of meeting this person in the *future*. The study had no measures of subjective expectations. However, we infer that those who face a stranger are less likely to report disapproved behaviors if they expect to meet that person again than if they do not expect a future encounter. This expectation appears to be based on prior personal experience in the interview situation. Support for this interpretation is strengthened by the finding that, among those who faced a stranger in 1984 but had met the same interviewer previously (group 2), the observed expectancy effect increases as a function of the number of prior contacts and is stronger for those who had seen that person three times rather than twice before. Among women, for instance, 54% versus 62% reported any lifetime marijuana use in the former compared to the latter group.

While lifetime cocaine use is a function of prior familiarity with the interviewer, intensity of use is not (data not shown), supporting the assumption that frequency of use among self-acknowledged users is accurate. Once respondents decide to report on their drug experiences at all, they do so to the best of their ability.

We explored further whether the observed interviewer familiarity effect in the reporting of deviant or sensitive behaviors could be due to the fact that the same factors related to drug use distinguish respondents who have been interviewed by the same person over time from those who have not. If those who have used illegal drugs are more deviant and more geographically mobile and therefore less likely to be assigned the same interviewer, our conclusion must be qualified. In order to test this additional hypothesis, we carried out two additional multivariate analyses.

First, we investigated the correlates of interviewer familiarity. Of the factors we examined, education (i.e., non–college educated), rural residence, region, religion, and living with parents were significant for both sexes, and being married, white, and nondelinquent were significant for men (data not shown). Region is clearly the variable most strongly associated with interviewer familiarity: residents in the north-central region are most likely to meet the same interviewer all four years and least likely to meet a different interviewer for each year. This region is where NORC, the organization conducting the fieldwork, is located. It is not solely individual characteristics, such as delinquency, that predict whether a respondent is likely to face the same interviewer but also, more importantly, proximity to the survey organization.

Furthermore, when the same variables that were used to predict interviewer familiarity are included in a logistic regression predicting cocaine use, the interviewer effect, although not as strong a determinant as delinquency, remains significant for the extreme category, i.e., those who never saw the same interviewer during the four waves of data collection (Table 5).

Interviewer characteristics. In contrast to the paucity of information on interviewer-familiarity effects, there is an extensive literature on interviewer-attributed response effects in surveys (see, for example, Sudman and Bradburn, 1974; Bradburn, 1983; Hyman et al., 1954; Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates, 1979; Turner and Martin, 1984). While the interviewer's social characteristics, personality, attitudes, and behaviors have all been mentioned as factors which potentially undermine results, it has been argued that response effects are more a function of questionnaire administration and question form, order, and length than of interviewer variables (Bradburn, 1983). The consensus is that interviewer–respondent interactions emerge as a function of demographic traits only if the question deals in some way with that particular trait. Racial, ethnic, social class, age, and sex effects occur if the question pertains to race, ethnicity, social class, age, or sex but not otherwise (Schuman and Converse, 1971; Sudman and Bradburn, 1974; Campbell, 1981; Colombotos, Elinson, and Loewenstein, 1968; Weeks and Moore, 1981). The NLSY data provide further supporting evidence for this conclusion. We found no strong interviewer–respondent interactions for sex or race with regard to reporting of drug use (data not shown). However, there was a slight trend for higher proportions of reported use of illicit drugs by all women and by Hispanic males if the interviewer was ethnically dissimilar.

Discussion and Conclusion

The lower reporting of illicit drug use in the NLSY compared to other surveys was unexpected. While lifetime marijuana use reported in the NLSY is close to that of other national surveys, reporting for other illicit drugs is considerably lower, varying somewhat by substance and by lifetime degree of involvement. Those who fail to report use of a particular drug appear to be less intensely involved in using it. Thus, two processes appear to be going on concurrently. Lower involvement in a particular behavior as well as perceived threat may lead to underreporting of certain socially disapproved behaviors. As hypothesized by Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates (1979:83), "perceived threat thus acts as a gatekeeper to prevent further questions." However, once a respondent decides to acknowledge participation, threat does not appear to affect reported frequency of participation in the behavior. This certainly appears to be the case for the report of illicit drugs other than marijuana.

Table 5. Effects of Various Respondent Characteristics on the Log Odds of Ever Using Cocaine by 1984[a] (Logistic Regression)

Variable	Male (N = 4,862) B	Female (N = 5,117) B
Age (vs. 25–27)		
19–21	−.656***	−.517***
22–24	−.212*	−.094
Education (vs. 13+ years)		
Dropout, no diploma	.132	.136
Dropout, GED or diploma	.664***	.864***
High school graduate	−.115	.091
Marital status (vs. married)		
Never married	.570***	.777***
Sep./div./wid.	.417*	.525**
Residence (vs. urban)		
Rural	−.461***	−.380*
Region (vs. Northeast)		
North-central	−.680***	−.874***
South	−.369***	−.530***
West	.201	.186
Labor force status (vs. in school)		
Working	.241	.285
Unemployed	.259	.277
Keeping house	—	−.019
Race (vs. white/other)		
Black or Hispanic	−.649***	−.823***
Religion (vs. no religion)		
Catholic	−.271*	−.243
Baptist	−.602***	−.754***
Other protestant	−.213**	−.227
Jewish	.607	.601
Other	−.459	−.300
Living arrangement (vs. other)		
With parents	−.400***	−.367**
1980 delinquent acts (vs. none)		
1–2	.413***	.819***
3+	1.125***	1.362***
Interviewer familiarity (vs. '84 3 times)		
Never same interviewer	.266*	.450**
Never '84 interviewer	.104	.258
'84 interviewer once before	.046	.067
'84 interviewer twice before	.037	.226
Constant	−1.591	−2.335

[a] Logit coefficients.

* $p \le .05$. ** $p \le .01$. *** $p \le .001$.

Reinterviewing by the same interviewer in this longitudinal survey, the very feature of the research design which NORC emphasized as contributing to the high retention rate from 1979 to 1984 (Campbell, 1984; Jones, Burich, and Campbell, 1986), may have contributed to the underreporting of drug use. The rapport established between respondents and interviewer may deter the reporting of illegal and deviant activities. This may be especially the case when interviewers are older than respondents and thus represent the adult population that sets and defines norms in the society at large. Perhaps the interviewer becomes somewhat of a parental figure. The majority of interviewers in the NLSY survey are women (92.8%), and their mean age is 48.6. Field conditions that increase the subjective awareness of social norms may increase reluctance to admitting to behaviors that contravene these norms.

Furthermore, after years of responding to questions focusing primarily on labor force participation and education, respondents may also be suspicious of an extensive battery of drug questions. Whether "piggybacking" of illegal or sensitive questions in longitudinal surveys arouses more anxiety than similar questions in a standard cross-sectional survey needs to be explored more thoroughly.

Method of interview administration may be another contributing factor to underreporting. Although it is generally believed that more complete reporting of threatening behaviors occurs with self-administered rather than interviewer-read questions, this has not been definitely established (Sudman and Bradburn, 1974; Bradburn, 1983; Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates, 1979). A longitudinal survey that we conducted through face-to-face personal interviews revealed considerably higher levels of involvement with illicit drugs than did the NLSY (Kandel and Logan, 1984), levels that were similar to those reported by the GHS. Since its inception in 1972, the GHS has consistently used self-reported forms for the illicit drug questions. Alcohol prevalence rates increased appreciably in 1979, the first year that responses were marked on a private answer sheet form rather than spoken to the interviewer, compared to rates reported in the prior survey in 1977. However, in the following survey in 1982, rates went down, although not to levels as low as in 1977. Thus, the increase observed in 1979 may in part reflect real trends rather than differences in interview administration (Miller et al., 1983).

Groups for whom underreporting in the NLSY is most severe are often those for whom rates of use reported in the literature are comparatively low—women and blacks. The case of ethnicity is an especially important one. Every study that has reported drug use rates by ethnicity in epidemiological or school studies shows lower rates for blacks than for whites for almost all drug classes, including alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and nonmedical use of psychotropics, among adolescents as well as young adults (Bachman, Johnston, and O'Malley, 1981; Johnson, 1973; Miller et al., 1983; Maddahian, Newcomb, and Bentler, 1986; Bray et al., 1986; Robins, 1985; Zabin et al., in press), although not necessarily for middle aged respondents (Robins, 1985). These lower rates in general population samples contrast with the overrepresentation of blacks among drug users who come in contact with various institutions, those in drug treatment programs (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1986) and general hospital admissions for a drug-related problem (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1981), and of blacks and Hispanics among arrestees with a urine test positive for drugs (Eric Wish, personal communication, 1986). In our sample, minority and female underreporting cannot be attributed to greater familiarity with the interviewer, since multivariate analysis indicates that blacks and Hispanics are equally likely (females) or even more likely (males) to have had different interviewers than are whites, and women are more likely to have had different interviewers than men, although the difference is not statistically significant.

The issue of underreporting of drug use by blacks has not been treated extensively in the literature, although the authors of *Monitoring the Future* note a higher rate of missing data on questions dealing with the use of illicit drugs among black males than other students (Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1984). There may be consistently greater underreporting of deviant activities by black and Hispanic than by white respondents, and lower quality of responses to surveys more generally. In a validity study of self-reported criminal behaviors, Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis (1981) concluded that blacks were more likely than whites to underreport their criminal offenses, a finding subsequently confirmed by Huizinga and Elliott (1984). From comparisons of the NLSY with data from the National Center for Health Statistics, Mott (1983) concluded that blacks were more likely than whites to underreport abortions. A consistent pattern seems to be emerging where members of minority groups are more inclined to provide socially desirable responses than majority members. One explanation may be that minority groups may feel more threatened or made more uneasy by such self-reports. Findings from Monitoring the Future tend to support this interpretation. In 1983, black non–drug users were more than twice as likely as whites to indicate that they would not have reported drug use had they been involved, 14% versus 6% for marijuana, and 19% versus 8% for heroin (Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1984: Q E13–15). The investigators attribute these racial differences to less "trust in the research process" (Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1984:10). Not only are blacks and Hispanics more reluctant to admit to deviant behaviors, they also appear to be less likely to provide reliable responses to less sensitive questions. A comparison of students' self-reports of family background, school performance, and coursework with parental responses and high school transcripts in the longitudinal survey *High School and Beyond* indicates that data from blacks and Hispanics are more discrepant than those from whites (Fetters, Stowe, and Owings, 1984).

Since not all studies that report racial differences control for other socioeconomic variables, educational attainment rather than minority group status may determine reaction to and ability to deal with surveys. That racial differences in underreporting remain significant in our multivariate analysis after controlling for schooling suggests that minority group status is a crucial factor in the quality of survey data, over and beyond any other factor related to educational achievement and socioeconomic status.

The NLSY data tapes are public use tapes that will be used by many other investigators. The finding of differential reporting for questions on the use of illicit drugs has implications for all researchers investigating deviant or illegal activities, however, not just those analyzing data from the NLSY. It would be important to determine the extent to which minority underreporting and misreporting is a pervasive problem that is affecting most attitudinal and behavioral indicators obtained through social surveys. The results from this study have documented, however, that field conditions—in particular, interviewer familiarity—as well as individual characteristics contribute to the quality of reporting of deviant behaviors. We speculate that interviewer familiarity increases salience of normative standards and that participants respond not only in terms of their past familiarity but also in terms of their subjective expectations regarding the probability of a future encounter with the interviewer.

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THE POLLS—A Report

IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION: TRENDS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LIBERAL–CONSERVATIVE BALANCE

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The ideological dimension of liberalism–conservatism is commonly used to describe political actors and to interpret political events. Despite the centrality and importance of this dimension among political elites, data concerning the public's self-identification as liberal or conservative have been regularly gathered only recently, starting in 1972 for the biennial election surveys of the Center for Political Studies (CPS), and in 1974 for the annual General Social Surveys (GSS). Now, however, questions about whether people consider themselves liberal or conservative are asked routinely.

Data on ideological self-identification are relevant to the debate concerning whether the electorate has become more conservative in the past two decades. Political observers have inferred such shifts from election returns and from the high visibility of such interest groups as the right-to-life lobby, the Moral Majority, and tax-reform organizations.

In order to track trends in ideological self-identification, we have assembled data on items that have been asked more than once by the same survey organization. We have confined our review to those items that directly ask respondents whether they consider themselves as liberal or conservative, excluding large numbers of related questions dealing with the ideological perceptions of political candidates and with definitions or understandings of ideological terms. We have also confined our search to national-level data from the United States.

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Items

Substantial "house effects" can be found in how ideology questions are framed and in how the public characterizes itself ideologically. Differences in question framing include whether or not a filter is used to exclude respondents who have no clear conviction, whether or not a middle position is offered, and whether seven or eight response categories are provided to respondents rather than two or three. To compare results across different questions, we have used as a summary measure the ratio of conservatives to liberals.

Although this conservative/liberal ratio varies depending on time period and question type, it generally fluctuates between 1.5 and 2.0. The major exception involves data from Yankelovich surveys, which obtain high ratios (from 2.2 to 4.5). Other organizations (such as *New York Times*/CBS and Harris) which have used similar questions have obtained lower ratios. Since *Times*/CBS and Harris polls explicitly ask about the respondent's political philosophy, while the Yankelovich questions make no mention of politics, many respondents in the latter surveys may answer in terms of their personal, rather than political, conservatism (e.g., preference for established habits, reluctance to take risks). The nature of the sample (registered voters only) or the set of response options (including a "radical" option) may also contribute to the Yankelovich results.

Varying the numbers of response categories (2, 3, 5, or 7) does not systematically alter the conservative/liberal ratio. When a "middle of the road" option is provided, however, 30% to 40% of the respondents choose this response. Many of those who choose a middle position may have only a vague notion of political ideology and may select this option rather than provide a "don't know" response. When an explicit filter ("or haven't you thought much about this") is provided, as in the CPS surveys, 25% to 35% acknowledge that they have thought little about their ideological identification; the proportion giving a middle-of-the-road response declines, compared to other surveys, but it is still substantial.[1]

Some interesting methodological comparisons have been made possible by joint use of the same basic seven-point scales in the CPS and GSS surveys. The CPS survey question has a filter, while the GSS question has no filter. The CPS question elicits a slightly higher conservative/liberal ratio; it also correlates significantly more strongly with party identification (Robinson and Fleishman, 1984). In 1982 the CPS and the GSS both included ten identically worded items concerning preferences for national spending priorities. With one exception (spending for health), the filtered and unfiltered questions did not differ significantly in their relationship to these items—although the filtered question did produce higher correlations.

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[1] Use of a CPS-type filter is recommended. Without a filter, many respondents without an ideological identification may choose the "middle-of-the-road" or "moderate" response options. Moreover, even with a filter, many moderates may have an ideological preference. Thus, in the 1984 CPS survey, respondents were first asked whether they considered themselves liberal, conservative, or moderate; moderates were asked if they leaned toward an ideological position. This procedure resulted in only 3% who steadfastly professed a moderate identification.

Trends

Has the electorate shifted over time toward a more conservative political ideology? For both CPS and GSS data, the distributions of ideological self-identification were compared across time by cross-tabulating ideology and year. Although chi-square for both data sources was statistically significant, the magnitudes of the relationships were minuscule in correlational terms (Tau-b = .03 for CPS and .04 for GSS). Controls for age, education, interest in politics, and party identification did not alter the finding of no major change during the 1970s (Fleishman, 1986). Change in the distribution of ideology has been especially negligible in the 1980s.

The conservative/liberal ratio rises in the GSS data from .96 in 1974 to 1.46 in 1986. CPS data show a smaller rise, from 1.42 in 1972 to 1.60 in 1984. The Roper data show more variability, but the ratios hover around 1.7 in the 1970s and tend to fluctuate over 2.0 in the 1980s. The same 2.0 ratio is found in other polls taken in the 1980s by other organizations. These trends correspond to increases in the proportion of conservatives of approximately 3%–5% and to smaller decreases in the proportions of liberals. The trend toward more conservatives, which is stronger among those with more interest in politics (Fleishman, 1986), is certainly nowhere near as profound as political commentators have suggested.

Trends toward more conservatism apparently occurred during the late 1960s. Data gathered prior to 1972 show much lower proportions of conservative identification. The proportions of conservatives and liberals are about equal in the Gallup items asked between 1938 and 1965. (The GSS data also show ratios close to 1.0 for the years 1974–1977.) However, in these 1938–1970 surveys the proportion of "don't know" and of "moderate" responses is much lower than for more recent data; this is particularly true for the 1944 NORC survey. One would expect that, given the lower levels of education among the public two generations ago, the proportion answering "don't know" would be *higher* than the proportion choosing the middle category or the filter option in more recent surveys.

Interpretations of Ideological Identification

In Converse's (1964) classic article, less than 5% of the American voting public mentioned purely ideological factors as reasons for their vote. Converse concluded that less than 20% of the electorate could be characterized as having "an understanding of the [liberal–conservative] distinction that captures much of its breadth" (p. 223). However, subsequent studies using open-ended questions have found up to two-thirds of the public able to demonstrate some correct interpretation, especially in terms of conservatives opposing and liberals favoring social-political change (Robinson and Fleishman, 1984).

In examining politically relevant closed-ended questions in the GSS, Robinson (1984) found that they correlated significantly with ideological identification, although only in the .10 to .25 range.[2] However, the strongest correlates of ideological identification were moral issues, especially those concerned with sex relations outside of marriage. These correlations suggest that the public's interpretation of this scale may be in terms of a "libertine–conservative" dimension.

The modest magnitude of these relationships led Levitin and Miller (1979) to conclude that "ideological position is not simply a statement of many issue positions" (p. 769). Conover and Feldman (1981) also argue that "the meaning of ideological labels is largely based on symbols rather than issues" (p. 641). It seems likely that some respondents answer in terms of their attitudes toward government intervention in the economy, while others may answer in terms of attitudes toward social or moral issues (e.g., racial equality, abortion).

While party identification remains the major predictor of vote in American presidential elections, self-identified liberals and conservatives differ more meaningfully and significantly on political issues than do self-identified Democrats and Republicans. Moreover, and perhaps most important, ideology is also significantly related to vote for president, even when party identification is controlled (Holm and Robinson, 1978; Miller and Shanks, 1981).[3]

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[2] Among the strongest correlates were attitudes toward racial equality, the Equal Rights Amendment, rights of free speech for communists and atheists, and communism as a form of government. At the other end of the spectrum, both liberals and conservatives were in essential agreement that the United States should stay out of world affairs, that the federal income tax is too high, and that the courts do not deal harshly enough with criminals.

Conclusions

Ideological identification is an important political orientation, reflecting the ambivalent and conflicting strands in the political thinking of the American electorate. While the public continues to identify more with the liberal (Democratic) party, they personally identify themselves as politically conservative by up to two-to-one margins.

Ideology is significantly related to party identification (Levitin and Miller, 1979; Fleishman, 1986). Like party identification, it shows moderate stability over time at the individual level. At the aggregate level, this stability is manifest in the lack of change over the past decade. Despite several years of issue framing and rhetoric from a conservative administration during the 1980s, the distribution of ideological identification has shifted hardly at all.

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[3] Shanks (personal communication) has also found marked, robust, and increasing correlations between liberal–conservative thermometer differences and vote in congressional elections.

The data reported below were assembled with the help of the Roper Center. CPS data are archived by ICPSR, and GSS data are available through NORC. All numbers in the tables are percentages, and the minimum sample size for each data set is reported in each table.

TWO RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Gallup (AIPO) (*N* = 1427+): In politics do you regard yourself as a liberal or conservative?

	Conservative	*In Between, Neither*	*Liberal*	*DK/NA*	*C/L Ratio*
1/38	40	7	43	17	.9
11/44(NORC)	42	4	54	NA	.8
1/47[a]	40	NA	35	25	1.1
3/48[a]	41	NA	31	27	1.3
3/50[a]	28	15	32	25	.9
2/54[b]	36	NA	35	29	1.0
12/54[b]	32	NA	31	37	1.0
5/55[b]	32	NA	35	33	1.0
1/57[b]	27	17	28	28	1.0
6/65(NORC)	34	16	34	16	1.0
12/65	35	16	32	18	1.1
3/70[c]	46	NA	28	26	1.6

[a] Do you consider yourself to be a conservative or a liberal in your political views?

[b] Taking everything into account, would you say that you, yourself, are more of a liberal or a conservative in politics?

[c] Suppose you had to classify yourself as either a liberal or a conservative. Which would you say you are?

Associated Press/Media General (*N* = 1243+): Do you consider yourself more conservative or liberal?

	Conservative	*Neither*	*Liberal*	*DK/NA*	*C/L Ratio*
6/84	56	8	30	6	1.9
8/84	58	11	26	5	2.2
11/84	54	12	29	5	1.9
2/86	57	9	28	6	2.0
4/86	54	13	28	5	1.9
6/86	56	12	27	5	2.1

THREE RESPONSE CATEGORIES

New York Times/CBS News (*N*= 1210+): How would you describe yourself on most political matters? Generally do you think of yourself as a liberal, moderate or conservative?

	Conservative	*Moderate*	*Liberal*	*DK/NA*	*C/L Ratio*
11/76	32	36	23	8	1.4
9/78	27	44	22	5	1.2
1/80	33	41	19	8	1.7
2/80	31	44	19	7	1.6
3/80	33	42	19	7	1.7
4/80	33	42	18	6	1.8
5/80	31	36	21	12	1.5
6/80	25	45	22	8	1.1
8/80	28	49	17	6	1.6
9/80 (3)	32	43	18	8	1.8
10/80	32	43	20	4	1.6
11/80	30	42	20	8	1.5
1/81	37	40	16	7	2.3
4/81	37	39	18	6	2.1
6/81 (2)	32	38	22	8	1.5
9/81	29	43	20	8	1.5
1/82	31	41	19	9	1.6
3/82	32	41	19	7	1.7
5/82	32	43	18	7	1.8
6/82	32	42	17	9	1.9
7/82	32	41	18	10	1.8
9/82	34	40	20	6	1.7
11/82	29	52	17	31	1.7
1/83	35	39	19	7	1.8
4/83	32	40	21	7	1.5
9/83	31	42	20	7	1.6
10/83 (2)	34	40	18	8	1.5
11/83 (2)	31	40	19	10	1.6
12/83	31	42	19	9	1.6
1/84	29	43	20	8	1.5
2/84	30	46	19	5	1.6
3/84 (2)	32	42	18	8	1.8
4/84	31	44	18	7	1.7
6/84	30	42	22	6	1.4
7/84	32	44	17	7	1.9
8/84	32	44	17	7	1.9
9/84	32	44	17	7	1.9
10/84 (4)	29	43	19	9	1.5
11/84 (3)	32	39	21	10	1.9
1/85 (2)	31	43	20	6	1.6
2/85	33	42	19	6	1.7
5/85	30	42	19	8	1.6
9/85	33	38	23	6	1.4
11/85	32	44	19	5	1.9
12/85	27	47	18	8	1.5
1/86	36	38	21	5	1.7
4/86	35	40	18	7	1.9
6/86	33	44	19	5	1.7
8/86	34	40	20	6	1.7

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple surveys in a given month.

Harris (N = 1250+): How would you describe your own personal political philosophy—Conservative, Middle-of-the-Road, or Liberal?

	Conservative	*Middle-of-the-Road*	*Liberal*	*Other/DK*	*C/L Ratio*
4/83	36	40	18	6	2.0
9/84	36	40	18	6	2.0
9/85	37	42	21	—	1.8
1/86	40	38	18	4	2.2

FOUR RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Yankelovich, Skelly, and White (N = 1000+): Do you think of yourself as conservative, moderate, liberal or radical?

	Conservative	*Moderate*	*Liberal*	*Radical*	*Not Sure/ Other*	*C/L Ratio*
3/83[a]	48	38	13	1	NA	3.4
6/83[a]	47	38	13	1	NA	3.4
9/83[a]	47	38	13	1	NA	3.4
12/83[a]	45	38	14	2	NA	3.2
1/84[a]	45	38	14	2	NA	3.2
8/84[a]	46	39	13	3	NA	3.5
9/84[a]	43	40	13	2	2	3.3
10/84[a]	44	37	12	2	5	3.7
12/84[a]	45	41	10	2	2	4.5
4/85[a]	48	35	12	1	4	4.0
7/85[a]	42	37	15	2	4	2.8
5/86	36	42	15	NA	8	2.4
7/86	38	37	17	NA	7	2.2

[a] Registered voters only.

FIVE RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Roper (N = 1489, 1263, and 1977+ after 1973): Now thinking politically and socially, how would you describe your own general outlook—as being very conservative, moderately conservative, middle of the road, moderately liberal or very liberal?

	Very Conservative	*Moderately Conservative*	*Middle of the Road*	*Moderately Liberal*	*Very Liberal*	*Don't Know*	*C/L Ratio*
10/71	8	38	30	21	5	7	1.7
9/73	7	34	28	20	5	6	1.6
1/74	10	32	29	17	5	7	1.9
6/74	7	28	32	21	7	5	1.3
7/74	6	28	37	23	5	7	1.6
8/74	8	31	28	20	7	6	1.4
9/74	8	31	33	18	5	5	1.7
11/74	9	31	29	20	6	5	1.5
12/74	10	31	29	18	6	6	1.7
1/75	11	30	29	20	5	6	1.6
2/75	10	34	28	17	5	7	2.0
4/75	10	32	28	19	7	5	1.6

	Very Conservative	*Moderately Conservative*	*Middle of the Road*	*Moderately Liberal*	*Very Liberal*	*Don't Know*	*C/L Ratio*
5/75	9	35	29	16	5	7	2.1
6/75	9	30	28	20	7	6	1.4
7/75	8	30	29	20	5	7	1.5
8/75	10	33	29	28	5	5	1.9
9/75	11	31	31	18	5	4	1.8
10/75	10	33	27	19	5	6	1.4
12/75	9	29	29	21	7	6	1.4
1/76	7	34	32	17	5	5	1.9
2/76	9	28	30	18	6	9	1.5
3/76	8	28	32	19	5	7	1.5
4/76	10	30	31	18	6	5	1.7
6/76	9	33	29	18	6	5	1.6
7/76	10	31	29	19	6	5	1.8
8/76	10	31	29	17	6	6	1.6
10/76	11	31	29	17	6	7	1.8
11/76	9	31	31	19	6	5	1.6
12/76	10	32	30	18	5	4	1.8
1/77	8	32	30	20	5	5	1.6
2/77	8	31	32	17	5	5	1.8
3/77	9	33	32	17	4	4	2.0
4/77	10	34	30	18	4	5	2.0
6/77	10	31	32	18	4	6	1.9
7/77	9	31	30	19	5	6	1.7
8/77	10	32	32	16	5	5	2.0
9/77	10	33	29	19	5	4	1.8
11/77	11	31	29	17	5	6	1.9
12/77	9	35	30	16	5	4	2.1
1/78	10	33	30	19	5	4	1.8
2/78	11	29	31	18	6	5	1.7
3/78	9	32	30	19	5	5	1.7
4/78	12	31	30	18	6	4	1.9
6/78	10	31	31	18	6	6	1.7
9/78	9	31	35	16	5	3	2.0
10/78	9	31	31	19	5	5	1.7
12/78	10	31	29	22	6	2	1.5
1/79	10	33	32	17	5	3	1.7
2/79	10	31	32	18	5	5	1.8
3/79	11	34	29	17	5	4	2.0
4/79	10	35	31	16	4	4	2.3
6/79	12	33	29	18	4	4	2.0
6/79	10	35	30	16	5	4	2.1
8/79	11	34	31	16	3	4	2.1
8/79	11	34	31	16	3	4	2.4
9/79	12	35	30	15	4	4	2.2
10/79	10	29	32	17	6	5	1.7
12/79	9	34	33	16	4	3	2.2
1/80	10	32	33	17	5	4	1.9
2/80	9	31	33	16	4	6	1.7
3/80	11	32	32	16	5	4	2.0
4/80	9	30	37	16	4	5	2.0
6/80	12	35	28	17	4	5	2.2
7/80	8	31	35	17	5	5	1.8
8/80	9	32	35	17	4	4	2.0
9/80	10	34	34	13	4	4	2.6
11/80	11	36	29	15	5	4	2.4
11/80	10	33	30	16	5	6	2.0
12/80	11	36	32	13	4	5	2.7

	Very Conservative	*Moderately Conservative*	*Middle of the Road*	*Moderately Liberal*	*Very Liberal*	*Don't Know*	*C/L Ratio*
1/81	12	35	39	15	4	5	2.5
2/81	9	35	31	16	4	5	2.2
3/81	11	35	31	14	4	5	2.5
4/81	11	36	30	15	4	4	2.4
5/81	10	36	31	15	4	5	2.4
7/81	10	36	32	14	4	5	2.6
8/81	10	33	33	16	4	5	2.2
8/81	10	33	33	16	4	5	2.2
9/81	10	33	33	16	4	5	2.4
10/81	10	35	31	15	4	5	2.4
12/81	11	33	32	15	5	5	2.2
1/82	10	34	33	17	4	6	2.1
2/82	9	31	35	14	5	6	2.1
3/82	11	32	31	18	4	4	2.0
4/82	9	34	31	14	5	7	2.3
6/82	10	34	34	15	4	4	2.3
7/82	8	34	32	17	5	5	1.9
8/82	11	32	31	17	5	5	2.0
9/82	10	34	33	15	4	4	2.3
10/82	10	36	31	16	3	4	2.4
12/82	10	33	33	16	4	4	2.2
1/83	10	33	32	18	4	4	2.0
2/83	10	34	33	15	4	4	2.3
3/83	11	33	30	16	6	4	2.0
4/83	10	32	35	14	4	5	2.3
6/83	9	33	32	18	4	4	1.9
7/83	11	32	31	18	4	3	2.0
8/83	9	32	34	16	5	4	2.0
9/83	11	35	31	16	5	4	2.2
10/83	9	33	32	16	5	4	2.0
12/83	9	33	32	16	5	4	2.0
1/84	8	34	34	16	4	5	2.1
2/84	10	35	31	16	4	5	2.3
3/84	10	35	30	16	4	5	2.3
4/84	8	32	35	17	5	4	1.8
5/84	10	35	30	17	4	5	2.1
7/84	8	32	32	17	5	5	1.8
8/84	10	34	33	15	4	4	2.3
9/84	8	31	35	17	4	5	1.9
10/84	8	33	33	17	4	4	2.0
12/84	11	34	31	14	4	4	2.5
1/85	9	36	32	15	4	4	2.4
2/85	8	32	36	16	5	4	1.9
6/85	11	33	32	17	5	4	2.0
7/85	10	31	34	17	4	4	2.0
8/85	11	33	30	15	5	5	2.2
9/85	12	32	33	15	4	4	2.3
10/85	11	31	32	16	5	7	2.0
12/85	12	32	32	16	4	4	2.2
1/86	11	32	31	16	5	6	2.0
2/86	10	34	31	15	5	5	2.2
3/86	10	35	31	14	4	4	2.5
4/86	11	33	31	17	5	5	2.0
5/86	11	33	31	16	5	5	2.1
7/86	12	31	30	16	6	5	2.0
8/86	10	34	31	15	5	4	2.2
9/86	12	31	32	16	5	5	2.0

SEVEN RESPONSE CATEGORIES—UNFILTERED

General Social Survey (NORC) (*N* = 1397+): We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

	EC	*Con*	*SC*	*Mod*	*SL*	*Lib*	*EL*	*C/L Ratio*
2/74	3	11	16	40	15	14	2	1.0
2/75	3	11	17	40	14	13	3	1.0
2/76	2	14	16	40	13	13	2	1.1
2/77	3	12	17	39	15	12	3	1.1
2/78	2	13	18	38	17	10	2	1.1
2/80	3	13	18	41	15	9	3	1.3
2/82	4	14	14	41	15	10	2	1.2
2/83	3	14	19	41	13	9	2	1.3
2/84	3	13	20	40	13	9	2	1.5
2/85	3	15	19	39	12	11	2	1.5
2/86	3	15	17	41	13	9	2	1.4

EC = Extremely Conservative; *Con* = Conservative; *SC* = Slightly Conservative; *Mod* = Moderate, Middle-of-the-Road; *SL* = Slightly Liberal; *Lib* = Liberal; *EL* = Extremely Liberal.

SEVEN RESPONSE CATEGORIES—FILTERED

Center for Political Studies (University of Michigan) (*N* = 1500+): We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

	EC	*Con*	*SC*	*Mod*	*SL*	*Lib*	*EL*	*DK*	*C/L Ratio*
12/72	1	10	14	26	9	7	1	31	1.4
12/74	2	11	12	26	8	11	2	27	1.3
10/76	2	11	12	25	8	7	1	33	1.6
12/78	2	11	14	27	10	8	2	27	1.4
10/80	2	13	13	20	9	6	2	36	1.7
12/82	2	12	13	22	8	6	1	36	1.8
10/84	2	13	14	23	9	7	2	30	1.6

EC = Extremely Conservative; *Con* = Conservative; *SC* = Slightly Conservative; *Mod* = Moderate, Middle-of-the-Road; *SL* = Slightly Liberal; *Lib* = Liberal; *EL* = Extremely Liberal.

LEFT–RIGHT DIMENSION

Gallup (AIPO) (*N* = 1509+): People who are conservative in their political Gallup views are referred to as being right of center and people who are liberal in their political views are referred to as being left of center. Which of these categories best describe your own political position?

	FR	*SR*	*MR*	*JSR*	*JSL*	*ML*	*SL*	*FL*	*MOR*	*DK*	*C/L Ratio*
10/84	5	7	20	17	12	11	4	2	12	11	1.7
5/85	4	7	20	19	14	12	5	2	12	7	1.5
4/86	3	6	19	22	14	13	4	3	11	7	1.5

FR = Far Right; *SR* = Substantially Right; *MR* = Moderately Right; *JSR* = Just Slightly Right; *JSL* = Just Slightly Left; *ML* = Moderately Left; *SL* = Substantially Left; *FL* = Far Left; *MOR* = Middle-of-the-Road; *DK* = Don't Know.

CPS FEELING THERMOMETER—AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Reported in degrees (*N* = 1200+): Where would you put (liberals/conservatives) on the feeling thermometer? Zero degrees indicates very cold or unfavorable feeling; 50 degrees is no feeling at all; 97 degrees is very warm or favorable feeling.

	Feelings Toward Conservatives	*Feelings Toward Liberals*	*Conservative–Liberal Difference*
1964	51.1	53.2	−2.2
1966	55.9	50.4	+5.5
1968	56.9	51.1	+5.8
1970	52.9	43.3	+9.6
1972	61.4	53.8	+7.6
1974	61.3	54.1	+7.1
1976	58.9	53.1	+5.6
1980	62.7	51.7	+11.0
1982	53.3	45.7	+7.6
1984	60.0	56.0	+4.0